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Vol. LII JUNE, 1917 No. 2

THE SMART SET

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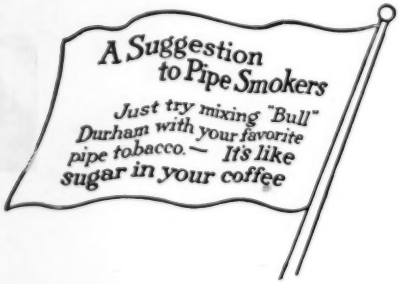

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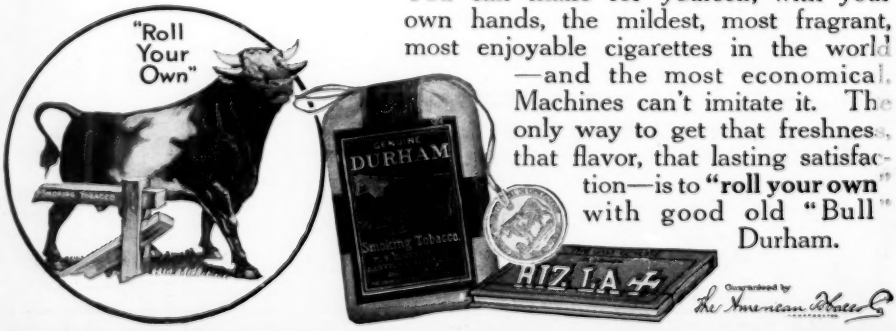

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Vol. LII JUNE, 1917 No. 2

The SMART SET

The Magazine That's Read in the Pullman

SONGS OF AN EVIL WOOD

By Lord Dunsany

THERE is no wrath in the stars,
They do not rage in the sky,
I look from the evil wood
And find myself wondering why.

Why do they not scream out
And grapple, star against star,
Seeking for blood in the wood
As all things 'round me are?

They do not glare like the sky
Or flash like the deeps of the wood;
But they shine softly on
In their sacred solitude.

To their high, happy haunts
Silence from us has flown,
She whom we loved of old
And know it now she is gone.

When will she come again,
Though for one second only?
She whom we loved is gone,
And the whole world is lonely.

II.

Somewhere lost in the haze
The sun goes down in the cold,
And birds in this evil wood
Chirrup home as of old;

Chirrup, stir and are still
  On the high twigs frozen and thin.
There is no more noise of them now,
  And the long night sets in.

Of all the wonderful things
  That I have seen in the wood
I marvel most at the birds
  And their wonderful quietude.

For a giant smites with his club
  All day the tops of the hill;
Sometimes he rests at night,
  Oftener he beats them still.

And a dwarf with a grim black mane
  Raps with repeated rage
All night in the valley below
  On the wooden walls of his cage.

And the elder giants come
  Sometimes, tramping from far
Through the weird and flickering light
  Made by an earthly star.

And the giant with his club,
  And the dwarf with rage in his breath
And the elder giants from far,
  They are all the children of Death.

And they're all abroad tonight,
  And are breaking the hills with their brood,
And the birds are all asleep
  Even in Plug Street Wood!

III.

I met with Death in his country,
  With his scythe and his hollow eye,
Walking the roads of Belgium.
  I looked and he passed me by.

Since he passed me by in Plug Street,
  In the wood of the evil name,
I shall not now lie with the heroes,
  I shall not share their fame.

I shall never be as they are,
  A name in the lands of the Free,
Since I looked on Death in Flanders,
  And he did not look at me.

THE SCHUYLER SCANDAL

By Lillian Foster Barrett

CHAPTER I

JOHN WELLINGTON SCHUYLER was a Wall Street broker, a man of unquestionable integrity and remarkable force of idea. He was a factor on the Exchange; what he thought and did had to be considered, and, considered, had to be dealt with. The name of Schuyler, connected in even the slightest way with any transaction, was a guarantee of upright dealing and scrupulous management. John Wellington Schuyler made no compromises; his code was as adamantine as his will.

At the death of his father he took his place in the world of finance and in fifteen years he had given in not once to the pressure of circumstance and event that force so many financiers into questionable proceedings. At the age of thirty-five he had married a Southern girl, the daughter of a retired army officer. Cathleen was beautiful, blonde and slender, with eyes that seemed to have infinite, wonderful blue depths.

Schuyler had given marriage careful consideration, but the women of his own set had failed to qualify according to his very high standards. He had met Cathleen at Hot Springs. Her devotion to an invalid father had first attracted his attention. Her quiet, rather reticent manner, interested him, and then—well then, in a very short time, Schuyler awoke to the realization that he was in love.

Cathleen had made an estimable wife, and now, five years later, Schuyler could still look back upon his marriage as one of the very lucky strokes in his career. Cathleen had been readily accepted by his own set, been voted "charming" by all, particularly the men, who never fail to relish a flavor, a bit new.

If Schuyler had discovered that the reason Cathleen was generally reticent was not because of a repression of much that she might say, but because there was nothing to say, he kept it to himself. She had a surface charm that sufficed all social demands and she presided very prettily over his New York ménage and his country place in Long Island.

She was extravagant, to be sure, even for the wife of a very successful Wall Street broker, but her husband easily excused that on the grounds that, as she had been used to so little worldly wealth before her marriage, she had no conception of the real value of money. So he paid the bills gladly with only a chance remark here and there as to ways and means by which expenditures could be cut. Cathleen listened and said nothing, but if she did attempt to put her husband's suggestion into practice, the size of the next month's bills gave no evidence of it.

Then the baby had come. Schuyler was disappointed in the fact that it was a girl, but he did not show his disappointment in the least. His enthusiasm for the little atom, his own flesh and blood, almost reached the point of absurdity.

Of course, Cathleen was very ill, so it could not be expected that her interest would equal his. But as she grew stronger he found that her indifference to the child still continued. He resented this bitterly and, having given the matter ample thought, he put it squarely before her.

She had seemed surprised, and from

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that time on roused herself to greater efforts in the child's behalf, but, even so, Schuyler had felt her interest an apathetic one and never cared to see the two together. But the years had blunted somewhat his sensibilities, and in due course of time he ceased to ponder on the strange lack of spontaneity in the relation between mother and child. He still hoped for a boy; he felt that that would be the culmination of his life's toil, to have a son to whom he could leave his untarnished name as his father before him had left him his.

But when he talked of it to Cathleen she only smiled her depthless smile, that just ruffled the infinite depths of her beautiful eyes. She was still wonderfully beautiful, a little stouter perhaps, always agreeable and seemingly plastic. Yes, Schuyler felt that, after all, he had been lucky.

But as time went on, things did not turn out as happily in the business world for Schuyler as he had every reason to expect. The turning of the tide was caused by a heavy purchase of some stock which his better judgment told him to keep out of. But expenses at home had been mounting up so exorbitantly that he felt himself constrained to take a gambler's chance in order to meet the demands upon him. He took the chance and lost.

That was the beginning.

In an odd, inexplicable way, he felt that his confidence in himself was gone. His keen, alert judgment seemed to fail him when it came to critical decisions and at times he became almost panic-stricken as to the eventual outcome of his business complications. There were times when he could have righted himself by identifying his interests with those of men of questionable reputation, but he resolutely refused to exploit anything that did not quite square with his own upright notions of a business deal.

So, at forty, John Wellington Schuyler found himself face to face with failure. If he had had himself alone to consider he would have begun to retrench long ago. As it was, with Cathleen and the child to deal with, he had gone on quite recklessly, in the blind hope that eventually he would recover his former security and control of speculation. But people were already beginning to shrug when the firm of De Haven and Schuyler was mentioned, and a crash seemed inevitable.

Schuyler sat in his study late one night and attempted to think things out. Cathleen was at a ball. He himself had met few social obligations lately, but he always insisted on his wife following her own round of gaiety. After all, she was younger than he, so what right had he to sap her interest in the frivolities that now made up her daily routine?

It was May, and the Spring air came hot and oppressive through the heavy draperies. Only that morning Cathleen had announced her intention of moving out soon to their country place. In his present crippled financial state he knew that as an impossibility, for to keep up with the lavish North Shore set even in prosperous times had proved a deadly drain. No, they would have to let Long Island go this Summer—perhaps rent Long Acre and take a tiny place at some shore resort. He himself would stay in town, make one last struggle to recoup, and then if worse came to worst accept his failure and begin over again.

As he thought of the elaborate scale on which he was at present doing things —town house, country place, yacht, camp in the Adirondacks—he felt that to be rid of it all might be a blessing. A small place somewhere, anywhere, a chance once again to get a little closer to the woman who shared his name, a chance to watch over and train the little daughter who had become almost a stranger to him these last months of worry and turmoil; yes, he felt he would then be living life more surely as it was meant to be lived.

He rose, his weary brain a little freshened by this recent picture, and went to meet his wife whom he heard in the hall.

"Come in, Cathleen. I have something to say to you."

She looked at him quickly and, fol-

lowing him into the library, threw herself rather heavily into a chair.

With the white light of the lamp full on her face she showed a little hard. It was not that she had coarsened perceptibly; it was only as if a rough hand had brushed off that first bloom that makes for youthful beauty and innocence. At another time the difference might have passed unnoticed; but tonight Schuyler had been thinking of her in terms of the young girl he had wooed so ardently five years before, and he now felt a distinct shock as he watched her throw off her cloak and settle back into the corner of the divan.

She had been drinking, not noticeably of course, but her eyes were a trifle heavy, and the fragrance of the gardenias at her breast sickened him as he looked at her.

He hated himself for this cold-blooded analyzing of the woman he loved, and just now particularly at a time when they two must pull close together. He turned down the light a little and found it easier to face her half lost in the deep shadows.

"Cathleen, it will be impossible for us to open Long Acre this summer."

He put it as a fact, but he missed the comforting support of an answer.

"My finances are badly involved."

She continued apathetic, but finally roused herself sufficiently to answer.

"Yes, I know."

This brought him a start. "You know?"

"Of course. It's been quite the gossip for some time."

"You mean— Has some one dared—?"

"If you don't keep me posted, John, some one else is bound to."

"Good heavens! You've known right along and yet—" He pointed to a pile of bills he had been but recently sorting.

"You gave me no indication that it was necessary to retrench. I have acted accordingly, that's all."

She easily had the advantage, for he was too stunned to respond. He felt a strange dislike welling up within him for this woman sitting there so cold-blooded and indifferent, and he could not trust himself at once to speak.

"What are you going to do?" she continued.

"Let things go to smash," and there was a fierceness in his voice she had hitherto never dreamed him capable of.

His answer brought her dismay, for she suddenly saw herself robbed of all this wonderful luxury she had revelled in so carelessly these last five years.

"Ah no, no!" she protested, and there were tears in her voice and in her eyes as she rose and went over to him.

"You can't, John, you can't! Think of"—and at that she had a lightning flash of inspiration—"think of the baby."

He took her in his arms at that.

"Forgive me, dear. I am a brute. No, things won't go to smash. Give me time and I'll fight my way out."

"Couldn't you—" she was clinging close to him now and her kisses soothed him a little. "Couldn't you borrow?"

He put her from him with a sigh.

"How little women, even the best, know of honor!"

She saw her mistake and tried a new tack. "What do you want me to do?"

"I don't know definitely yet. But it can't be Long Acre. Some seaside resort possibly."

"Newport?" she ventured tentatively. "We've never tried that."

"Quite out of reach," he said drily.

"But there are small cottages," she persisted. "I should be content with the smallest. The bathing would be so good for Betty—"

"Newport would cut me out except for an occasional week-end. However —tomorrow, Cathleen, not tonight. I am too tired to decide anything."

She gathered up her wraps and left him and it wasn't till afterwards he realized that she had neglected to kiss him good-night.

CHAPTER II

JULY found Mrs. John Wellington Schuyler comfortably established in a small cottage on Narragansett Avenue,

in Newport. The cottage had been found for her by a Mrs. Estes, an older woman to whom she had become fairly attached during the past Winter, and the rental of it had been arranged on easy terms. Mrs. Estes, herself a woman of few charms, was in the habit of exploiting all the young pretty matrons who came within her ken, in the hope of getting a sort of reflected glory.

Cathleen Schuyler proved to be a fortunate experiment. She was handsome enough to attract the admiration of all the eligible men, and yet not clever enough to detract from the somewhat questionable wit and scintillation of the older woman.

It was indeed a remarkable combination and one that promised well for general excitement and adventure. Cathleen Schuyler lacked initiative; Mrs. Estes furnished that. Cathleen lacked daring; Mrs. Estes dared all. Cathleen was a good-looking figure head; Mrs. Estes worked the ropes.

The little cottage on Narragansett Avenue became quite a centre for the set that makes so easily for moral laxity and disregard of all accepted standards.

If John Wellington Schuyler had been a less busy man he would have seen at once the lay of the land. As it was, a week-end here and a week-end there taught him nothing. He found Cathleen always agreeable, always plastic. The economy he was obliged to enforce upon her she accepted gladly, and proved to be, after all, a practical little manager.

"It's because we have so few servants that money goes so much further," she confided to him, and then he sketched an outline of the little home they might one day have to put up with.

"It won't be so bad, Cathleen. The only thing I hate to part with is the yacht. I'll bring her down the end of August and have a last fling, in case I have to let her go in the Fall. But it won't be so bad, darling. You and I and the baby—"

Cathleen was sitting on the top step of the veranda and looked sweet and girlish in a white flannel tennis costume.

She smiled up at him now. "No, it won't be so bad. But don't you think it a good idea for me to stay on here till fairly late? Till we know definitely how things are going on the Exchange? It will save the expense of opening up the town house."

At which he lauded her foresight and kissed her and tried to forget about the business anxieties that were pressing so close about him.

That night he went back to town quite reconciled to the crash that now seemed so inevitable.

For a month Schuyler struggled to recover his footing in the money mart, tried to piece together the shreds of his former credit to the extent of floating a loan of five hundred thousand dollars. That amount would have saved him. The terrible effort it cost him to bring himself to negotiate the loan was equalled only by his bitter chagrin when he failed to put the matter through.

Ten years ago he could have raised a million easily and people would have rushed to take his security. In what had he failed? That was the question that haunted him to the exclusion of everything else. On the day that he realized definitely that ruin was a certainty and that eight weeks at most would see the firm of De Haven and Schuyler in bankruptcy, he determined to put his yacht in commission and to go off somewhere with Cathleen for a long restful month. He felt that was his due after the strain of the last few months, and he wanted to gain a little strength before facing the general wind-up of things in the Fall.

He left his office with a strange regret in his heart and went wearily to his quarters at the Vanderbilt.

On his desk was a letter in a hand unknown to him.

He opened the thing listlessly—another bill perhaps, though all business mail went to the office.

A number of clippings slipped out of the envelope as he opened it and in a minute his apathy had given place to a taut and eager attention. Who sent

the clippings he never found out, whether a friend or an enemy. They had been cut out of a current scurrilous paper and presented a few brute facts coldly and ruthlessly. Those facts struck in on Schuyler and, strange to say, he never for an instant doubted the obstructive truth of them.

He knew of a certainty that what was presented to him there was presented faithfully, that the woman he had cared for, protected, was playing him false in her dull, apathetic, passionless way. He felt he could have forgiven a grand passion, purified by its own intensity, but hers was only the passive acceptance of something that in her cold-blooded, calculating way she deemed for the moment worth while. The man involved was Larry Walters, a multi-millionaire. That explained much! An echo of her words came to him: "It's because we have so few servants that the money goes so much further." And he could see her quite clearly, sitting there in the morning sunlight as she had said the words.

Schuyler came of a family of fighters. There seemed to him but one solution, and that a brutal one. He must thrash the man, kill him if necessary. But then, what to do with the woman? Anger, passion, rage flared up in him and then on the ebb of his emotion came disgust and a helpless, dull despair. The thought of suicide hurtled through his brain, but he put that from him as impossible.

It was a lurid night for Schuyler, a night that lagged through endless hours of seething thought and bitter, hopeless indecision. Morning found him infinitely weary, but with a determination at length clearly formulated to go down to Newport and face his wife with a direct accusation. The way she met the situation would determine his future conduct.

He left about ten o'clock on his yacht. It was a wonderful day with a stiff breeze blowing, the sort of day that whips into action every nerve in a man's body. The beautiful yacht, long and easy as to line, luxurious as to equipment, swept gracefully along, and Schuyler gave his weary body up to the physical rest it so sadly needed. He slept for over an hour.

And then he awoke slowly to the realization of what lay before him. Again he fought it all out, and again exhausted and brain fagged he slept.

At six that night they cast anchor in the harbor of Newport. It was Yacht Club week. Myriads of lights scattered here and there and the strains of an orchestra in the distance denoted a careless gaiety so characteristic of this resort by the sea.

At another time Schuyler would have given himself up to the beauty and spirit of the scene, but tonight each twinkling light acted as a goad to his jaded nerves.

"Dinner on deck, sir?" asked his steward.

"Yes—that is—no. I'd rather not. It's a bit chilly. Don't hurry. I shan't go ashore till about nine."

For it had suddenly come to him that he could not go home directly. There might be guests and he felt it impossible to sit through a long formal dinner with his mind at its present tension. And then, even if Cathleen were alone, there were the servants, always hovering about at the dinner hour, always curious.

No, he would wait. Ten o'clock would find her either out, in which case he would go and pick her up somewhere, or else she would be spending a quiet evening at home and there would be ample opportunity for explanation.

Explanation!

He smiled bitterly at that, for he knew of a certainty there could be none. His wife's guilt stood out more and more as an established fact as he pondered the matter. Explanation! No, there could be none. Adjustment, possibly! For the thought of the child had come to him in those long hours on the yacht and he now felt a strange leniency and tendency to compromise. He would, had the opportunity been offered him, have done his utmost to save any woman of the streets from further

degradation. He would have refrained from condemning and given her most gladly a fresh start. And so with Cathleen perhaps! Perhaps!

And yet he was not quite sure of himself, for his blood still seethed at the white image of her as he had seen her last. Her attitude in facing him would determine everything; it came round to that once again, and so he left it.

At ten o'clock he found himself going up the path of the little cottage on Narragansett Avenue. It was very still and he lingered a minute to get the distant murmur of the ocean, breaking gently against the cliffs nearby.

He sighed deeply and then pulling himself together rang the bell.

A footman, new and strange to him, answered the summons. There was a crafty aggressiveness about the man, and Schuyler had the strange feeling of being an intruder in his own house.

"Mrs. Schuyler is not at home." Schuyler looked into the man's shifty eyes and suddenly suspicion, started by the man's evil look, became a certainty. He could hardly control himself as he forced his way into the hall.

"I am Mr. Schuyler. I shall go to Mrs. Schuyler's room and wait till she returns."

The two looked at each other steadily.

The man was thoroughly frightened now, but John Schuyler cut in on his tentative explanations.

"Damn you—keep still. Here, none of that."

The man had started up the stairs ahead of him. Then with a last supreme effort Schuyler recovered his dignity, and forced the man to accept his authority.

"I know the way. You may go. I'll lock up for the night."

He pointed to the passage leading to the servants' quarters and the man slunk out of sight.

Schuyler listened till the footsteps died away, then deliberately put out all the lights.

As he went up the stairs the weight of the dark seemed to press upon him and he had to fight his way through the oppressive blackness that tried to keep him back.

On the landing he stopped for breath and leaned against the balustrade. There was the slight creaking of a door at the head of the stairs and a tiny shaft of light slit the blackness.

Some one was listening.

Then Schuyler got the situation in all its stark banality and gave himself up to the sardonic humor of the thing. It was cheaply melodramatic and he could have laughed as he pictured the terror of the two guilty ones listening to his lagging footsteps. Well, he would prolong the suspense. He went up two more steps slowly. The door above closed softly and again there was nothing but that great black wall ahead.

He breathed heavily. How would it end? What would happen? He found himself trembling violently. If they expected heroics he would disappoint them. He would—but he was too dazed to think.

He heard the door open again and with a supreme effort dragged himself up the remaining steps. He staggered and put out his hand unsteadily and then he found himself face to face with Larry Walters.

By the light that came through the door he could see the expression of Larry's face; the coolness in the eyes that met his compelled his admiration.

Larry was ready to take what came.

"Caught," he said quietly.

"Yes," articulated Schuyler.

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked Larry steadily.

Schuyler smiled grimly. "I don't know. Nothing—I think," he said after a pause.

The two men faced each other squarely. There was a moment's tense pause.

Then from within the room there came a low, shivering sob. Schuyler started, pushed the door open quickly, and discovered Cathleen, who had been listening.

She presented a picture of the most abject terror. The white, frightened look of her, the absolute cowardice he read in her eyes goaded Schuyler to the

point of madness. If she had shown one bit of courage, one lightning flash of intelligence it might have ended quite differently. She fell to the floor in her fear and threw her arms about her husband's knees.

The stupidity and dull sensuality of the face raised to his in pleading infuriated him beyond measure, and he struck at her blindly. But the softness of her body as it yielded to his blow brought him up short with the realization of what he was doing, and he turned all the force of his fury upon Larry who had stepped forward to intervene.

With the strength of a maniac he attacked him. There was a desperate struggle and all the while the whimpers of the woman, cowering in the corner, drove him on to greater and greater brutalities. Larry was an easy victim. Exhausted by his recent excesses, surprised at the suddenness of the onslaught, he went down at once.

Schuyler spent the fury and wrath of his passion on a half-resisting body that very soon ceased to resist at all.

Ten minutes later Larry was sent crashing down the black length of the long stairs, a bruised, shapeless, huddled heap.

CHAPTER III

Mr. and Mrs. John Wellington Schuyler reported very early at the Casino next morning. Mrs. Estes was very much surprised, a little disconcerted, in fact, as she greeted him.

"So unexpected!" she had said a little nervously. She was not quite ready for the very hard look he bestowed upon her, and turned away effusively to her dear Cathleen.

Cathleen showed a somewhat fixed smile and a general tendency to say nothing in a rather frightened way. Mrs. Estes summed the situation up in her mind and hurried on to spread the news.

But rumor already was rampant, and the rather conspicuous absence of Larry Walters corroborated the worst suspicions. Neighbors of the Schuylers added lurid details to the account of the mix-up and by nightfall a pretty accurate idea of the matter was held by nearly everyone of the Cottage Colony.

There was a big dinner given that night at the Van Dams' and society was eagerly astir. Of course, the Schuylers would be there, and doubtless Larry. What would happen? Better than any first night at a drama! The men showed a tendency to back Schuyler; they recalled him in his football trim of years ago; but the women sided with Larry.

Larry was undoubtedly a favorite. The wealthiest man of his age in the country, Larry Walters had had things very much his own way for many years.

Married at an early age, he soon began to fret under the matrimonial yoke, and had long since quite easily freed himself from domestic ties. For if a man has sixty millions he can do about anything, and the young wife was quite willing, after the first haze of romance had lifted, to give him his head in the matter of affairs of the heart in exchange for like freedom and a more than lavish allowance. So Larry had gone in extensively for amours, preferably with young married women of his own set.

There was a piquancy added in the presence of a husband somewhere on the distant horizon line, a husband who might step in and make trouble on occasions. For Larry was a gambler at heart and enjoyed to the fullest the game of chance. He plunged in the game of love as he plunged in the stock market, and he had had some notoriously narrow escapes in both lines. But things had always righted themselves in the financial world, usually very much to his advantage, and the forbidding husband never had stepped in, so Larry had gone blithely on his way. Lovable, charming, daring, he was spoiled outrageously.

People had wondered a little at his infatuation for Cathleen Schuyler this summer. Of course, Cathleen was lovely to look at and Larry had a penchant for blondes, but wasn't she a trifle heavy, just a bit dull for Larry's keen wit? But you never can tell. Perhaps

his most recent affair with the vivacious Mrs. Brittingham had cured him for a while of brilliant women.

"No doubt he finds Cathleen restful," quoth one little lady of artless mien, at which the company present dissolved into unseemly mirth.

But whatever the bond, the two had been constantly together to the exclusion of everyone else. People had taken it for granted that John Schuyler knew. Heroics on the part of husbands had seemed surprisingly out of date, so that now when undoubtedly something unusual and startling was in the air society was keenly agog.

The Schuylers arrived just before dinner was announced. Cathleen had achieved a most daring costume, the sort to bring out to best advantage her marvelous lines and the shimmering gold of her hair. But her face showed a bit white under the make-up and she hardly took her eyes from her husband's face.

Schuyler, in marked contrast to his wife, was perfectly at his ease and showed his usual courteous self in the round of greetings. But there was a tremendous undercurrent of excitement in the air. People were waiting—where was Larry Walters? A wave of disappointment swept them all when the hostess rose to go to the dining room. There was to be no scene, after all, perhaps, for Larry was not there.

As soon as the guests were seated, Mrs. Brittingham came sweeping in with much *éclat* and apologies for her tardiness. She had just come in on her yacht from a week's cruise.

"Some wretch who came in last night took my moorings; so this delay! Ah! John Wellington Schuyler, I salute you! You are the guilty one, I think. I thought it looked like the *Spindrift*, but I didn't know you'd put her in commission yet."

John Wellington was contrite.

"I have a new captain, hence the mistake."

Mrs. Brittingham was by far the most fascinating woman of the younger set. Keenly alert with a ready wit she invariably sparkled. When she spoke, people usually listened, sure that something worth while would be forthcoming. So now, people dropped the polite unrealities that had been occupying them and listened to Mrs. Brittingham's set-to with John Schuyler.

"How long since the *Spindrift* has been released?"

"Only yesterday. I'm planning a month's cruise with Cathleen," Schuyler spoke distinctly.

"Ah! A second honeymoon! How unique!"

She said it with the full sense of the flirtation that had been going on in their midst all summer, but Mrs. Brittingham had once made advances to John Schuyler and had never quite forgiven him his cool dismissal of them. Her admiration of him, of which she was still conscious as she looked at him even now, made her even more desirous to hurt.

"Why not?" he said. *"Il n'est pas defendu."*

She veered a little and turned to Mrs. Van Dam.

"My dear, everybody's here. The best gathering of the season! With all due respect to you as hostess, there's something back of it. I have it! A new scandal, and we've all assembled to thresh it out. Am I right?"

From the queer, strained silence that fell on the company she knew her haphazard guess had hit the mark. She was at her best on occasions of this sort, and there was something in the cool eyes of Schuyler that made her want to compel his admiration for her brilliance so she determined to dare her utmost. She looked rapidly about the table to get her bearings.

"Did I say everybody was here? But no! Where is my quondam Larry?"

Mrs. Van Dam feigned surprise, so did the other guests, and there was a thorough looking around as if Larry in a mood of jocundity might have taken refuge in some of the floral decorations of the long table. There was a murmur of amazement.

"True. He's not here, is he?" said Mrs. Van Dam and no one seemed to

see the absurdity of her flat remark. There was again a silence.

"Oh! by the way." Dick Manning had something to say at the other end of the table and was trying to get it out with a semblance of the casual. "I met Pursell, the *Herald* man, as I dropped into the Casino just now, and he said that Larry—"

Dick met the eyes of Schuyler at that point in his story and stopped abruptly.

"Go on." Schuyler's voice had a compelling note in it and Dick stammered on.

". . . that Larry had a bad case of appendicitis and would probably be in the hospital for a month."

There was a minute's tense pause; then everyone started to talk at the same time. Mrs. Brittingham's clear voice could be heard over the babble and she seized at once on the weak point of the story.

"In the hospital a month with an appendicitis! But we do it overnight these days! Absurd!"

Dick hastened to the support of his story.

"But you see—Larry may do it with frills. Larry rather insists on doing everything with frills. Doesn't he?"

Mrs. Brittingham flashed a smile at Dick to indicate that she got him, but was ruthless in following up her point.

"I don't believe it's an appendicitis. I leave it to everybody. Larry's not the sort of man to have an appendix, now is he? I wager he got drunk and some one thrashed him—"

At that, the real truth of the matter flashed across her.

She got it as she caught the drawn, frightened look of Cathleen across the table. She got it as she took in the startled line of faces on both sides of her, and she got it quite inevitably as she looked into the eyes of Schuyler. There was an intensity and depth of expression in those eyes as they quite fearlessly met hers that made her gasp for breath, and she suddenly hated herself for having put this man, so much more splendid than any other man she knew, at such a disadvantage. She looked deep to get in full the hostility that she knew must be there. The two hung so a minute, and then with a queer shivering little sigh Mrs. Brittingham turned away.

"But after all, why not give Larry the benefit of the doubt? I pass the appendicitis story, Dick." She turned to the other end of the table. "Larry's booked to race Whirlwind at Saratoga next week, isn't he? By the way, is anyone going down?"

Things passed off and the dinner ran its course. The Schuylers and Mrs. Brittingham left before the dancing began. Cathleen was upstairs putting on her wrap and John Schuyler faced Ann Brittingham as they stood together in the hall.

"You forgive me?" she asked directly.

"I forgive everything—except stupidity."

He let her take from that what she would. They looked at each other quite earnestly. In some mysterious way a clear wonderful note of understanding had been struck between them. Ann sighed a little as she withdrew her gaze and turned away, and John Schuyler found himself singularly unstrung as he joined his wife a minute later.

CHAPTER IV

LARRY WALTERS was in the hospital for a month. There was a time, a week after the Van Dam dinner party, when rumor said he was dying. That Larry, so young and eagerly alive, could die was a contingency no one had thought of. In the calculations of youth and pleasure Death does not play a part. So society was startled out of its usual careless acceptance of things and became wrapped in a gloom quite strange to it. Larry dying? People clustered in groups and talked in low tones. The Schuylers went everywhere and together. Society watched John Schuyler furtively and curiously. John Schuyler watched his wife.

Schuyler felt himself in those days of waiting distinctly of dual personality. There was the man who suffered in-

tensely at the thought of what he had done. He had always liked Larry; even if he had hated him, the thought of sending a man, aflush with life and enthusiasm, headlong into the next world, was not a comfortable one. To kill a man! Good God! Schuyler faced that fact through the long hours of the night, through the longer hours of the day when he forced himself to smile, to go about and play his part carefully, elaborately. He shuddered each time he heard Larry's name mentioned and expected the worst. It was the effect of the crime on his own soul that he was afraid to face, not any material consequences that might ensue from the deed.

And then there was another side to him, a new side. There was the man that abstracted himself and looked on cold-bloodedly at this drama of life and death, looked on as a spectator in no way involved in the passion and struggle of it. It was in this new rôle that he turned to his wife and studied her deliberately. He atavated his emotions and then turned the searchlight of his reason full upon her. By its hard, cruel light he analyzed her pitilessly.

He had known for a long time that she was stupid, infinitely stupid, but in a spirit of chivalry he had never admitted the fact even to himself. He dwelt on that truth now relentlessly. Yes, that was the keynote of her make-up. Her virtue had been the virtue of stupidity and as such was valueless. Her sin had been the sin of stupidity and as such was unforgivable.

He contrasted her with Mrs. Brittingham with no sense of disloyalty. Ann Brittingham had been married very young. She was the daughter of a Western millionaire and the alliance with George Brittingham, who could offer her name and position in exchange for her own fabulous dowry, was generally considered a good one. Ann had adored her husband with all her young ardor, but the discovery of his infidelity within a year of their marriage had caused her to give up recklessly all the finer things of life and to defy law and order. She had taken unto herself lover after lover, and the world had looked on and smiled. For Ann had the wit to dare, the passion that compelled forgiveness through its very intensity.

But Cathleen was dully sensual, and such a pitiful coward! He recalled the white, frightened look of her when he had found her that night. It was the look of abject terror he read in her eyes that had goaded him on to his brutal thrashing of Larry. Her intellect was clod-like; he had been obliged to resort to the lowest methods to give an object lesson that it was capable of grasping. Anything finer would have quite escaped it. And so, poor Larry had been the victim.

In the days when Larry was rumored as dying, Cathleen went about, a look of frozen horror on her face. Schuyler studied her most carefully then. He knew she cared nothing for Larry, any more than she cared for him. It was simply that her little mind was incapable of standing the weight of this big issue.

But whatever the cause she quite obviously suffered, and John Schuyler found himself taking an almost fiendish pleasure in exploiting her in her misery. The strain was beginning to tell in lines about her too flaccid mouth, in the glassy stare of the once beautiful blue eyes, in the general let-down of her whole appearance. Her hair showed too yellow in the morning light; the rouge stood out too obviously on the cheek bones. Schuyler watched the disintegration of this woman whom he had once loved so warmly, watched it cold-bloodedly and waited.

"We shall go to the Casino this morning," he would say at breakfast. There were no protests; she was ready when he was.

"We're golfing this afternoon. Anderson-Prescotts for dinner tonight," and always he found her passive. He would have preferred to have had her less ready. Had she shown a little fight he might have been less cruel perhaps.

People watched them carefully, with the attention focussed on the husband. They looked at him as a new and interesting species in their midst, and the

general verdict was that he was too fine to be wasted on a woman like Cathleen. Had he not been there to compel attention, Cathleen would have found herself quite ostracized by this set that had seemingly up to now condoned her in her indiscretions. The ability to get away with a thing was what stamped one as of the right sort, and Cathleen had failed in that. Mrs. Estes had long since deserted, and rushed off to Bar Harbor for fear of being identified with her former protegé in her downfall.

The attitude of the men was particularly interesting. Following Larry Walters' lead, most of the younger set had wasted a good deal of time that Summer in hovering about the stunning Mrs. Schuyler. With one accord now they all lauded Schuyler's rather drastic measures and deplored the morals of the lady. Nothing escaped Schuyler; not a detail got by him, but Cathleen was apparently unaware of everything that went on about her and met sneers and advances all with the same little set frozen smile.

One day, however, while Larry was still hanging in that awful balance between life and death, Schuyler found his wife really ill, and was obliged to let up in his stern jurisdiction over her doings. He went to the Casino alone that morning—Mrs. Brittingham was there and the two found themselves alone in a very short time.

"Well?" she turned to him directly. "They say Larry is going to die. Are you ready to face it?"

Schuyler found that her taking for granted what everyone else so elaborately evaded was distinctly refreshing. He admired her courage and directness and yet he felt keenly the probe of her question. A sigh surged up in him. He meant to meet her frankness with indirection, but instead he burst out.

"Good God, no! It's all so terrible!"

The barriers were down.

Ann Brittingham caught a glimpse of the sick soul of this man who had presented such a brave front to the world these many days, and her heart went out to him with all the sympathy her responsive nature was capable of.

They said little, but each was satisfied that the other understood.

"No, it's not terrible," she said at length. "It's wonderful. It's time society was brought up short by something of the sort." She looked at him deeply. "This is an age of compromise, and you are out of place, that's all."

He thought on that for a while.

"I wonder after all," he said, "if the wiser course were not to bend."

"The easier course," she cut in. "It's given to only a few adamantine ones, to be able to stand out. Do you remember, John, that year after you were married, when I met you at Bay Shore?"

He recalled it quite clearly, and wondered what she was leading up to.

"I wanted you—oh, awfully—for my—for my own—" It seemed quite natural for them to discuss the matter. "You saw how things were going and went away. I thought then I could never forgive you. Now I think I could never have forgiven you, had you fallen."

He smiled at her paradoxes.

"Don't you see? It was good for me to run up against a man in whose make-up there was no room for compromise. That's why this affair of Larry's will benefit us all eventually."

"Your logic is a bit bewildering," he said, but in spite of himself he felt consoled and cheered. "Then whatever happens, I shall be sure of one friend—"

"Yes—but I feel perfectly sure that the worst won't happen. Larry won't die." She spoke with conviction. "No—I know Larry. He'll work mischief for us all yet." The tone of their conversation had lightened. She rose.

"You are wonderful," he said as they shook hands.

"And you—ah! you are absolute!"

She went off laughing, and John Schuyler went home with a feeling of greater security and faith in himself, and above all the firm conviction that Larry would not die.

CHAPTER V

LARRY did not die, he would not die. Mrs. Brittingham had read him correctly there. But he came out of the hospital a changed man. The four weeks of his illness had wrought a strange difference in his appearance and in his nature. He was stouter, a fact which seemed odd under the circumstances, heavier generally, and with a tendency to become very short of breath. That, in a man who was one of the best polo players in the country! And there was a corresponding change in his disposition.

The old, rollicking, devil-may-care Larry had disappeared. In his place was an older man with a sullen turn, capable of a snarl perhaps. The mind seemed dull, slow of comprehension, the wit blunted. So much for the infatuation of a pretty woman and a night's blunder!

"He's far from well, yet," his friends argued, but Ann Brittingham shook her head sadly. "The old Larry has gone, forever, I'm afraid. Life plays those tricks on us sometimes over night."

The psychological change that had been wrought in Larry during those long, weary hospital hours was an interesting one. The transition from gay adventure to the deliberate facing of eternity was too abrupt and startling a one to be grasped in the fitful moments of consciousness of that first week.

A faint realization that something horrible had happened in the past and that there was a terrifying black nothingness ahead of him was all that his sick brain was capable of getting in its weary bewilderment. Facts eluded him; only vague, formless dreads hovered about, pressed close and smothered the beating of his heart.

Snatches of his past life, lurid, chaotic, grotesque, came back to him, a scene here, a scene there, and hovering always in the background were strange sinister faces that smiled and seemed to mock, yes, always to mock. He wanted to cry out in protest, strike at those leering faces that seemed so strangely familiar, but he was too weary and sore, so he turned away.

And then, on the other side, there was that infinite blackness stretching out in its fearful void, again, waiting to swallow him up—whichever way he turned there seemed to be always despair and mockery and pain—terrible racking pain.

He remembered a favorite hunter of his that he had spiked once in a reckless jump, and in his delirium the sufferings and screams of the animal became his own. Unconsciousness claimed him ever and again, or his reason would have slipped away forever.

His splendid vitality told in the end and the second week found him entirely out of danger. The facts of the affair that had laid him low were now quite clear in his mind and he brooded over them with a bitterness the old Larry would have been incapable of.

His anger, at first blind and unreasoning, was directed against the universe in general and the controller of destinies in particular. Hitherto, he had made a fetish of inclination and his sixty millions had carried him through supreme. But now, he had been beaten. It was that fact struck in and bruised his consciousness. He had been beaten, and his confidence in himself was gone. That was the supreme tragedy of it.

Then by degrees he concentrated all his bitterness and hate on the man who had brought the tragedy upon him. The image of John Schuyler as he had presented himself that last night was constantly in his mind. The disintegration of his brain and reasoning powers was evidenced in the fact that as he thought the matter over he could see no justification at all for Schuyler's attitude in the matter. The brute fact of the thrashing was blazoned forth against the background of his own subsequent sufferings. The why and wherefore of that thrashing seemed utterly to escape him. So he brooded on his revenge.

Strange to say he thought not at all about Cathleen in those first few weeks. The shock of the scene to her sensibili-

ties, the possible outcome of her husband's wrath toward her, the general attitude of society in the matter—these did not enter into his consideration at all. He began to think of Cathleen in the end only as a possible instrument of revenge.

He thought it all out carefully, furtively. To continue his *liaison* with the woman in the face of her husband's opposition seemed to him the only means by which he could recover his footing and compel the applause of the world, just now so inclined to sneer. He had refused to see everybody during his convalescence, but the tone of the scurrilous papers that he read with such avidity had taught him what to expect. Oh, no, he wouldn't be cut. A man with sixty millions never is! But he would be laughed at! So he brooded and planned his campaign.

As to Cathleen—he never doubted his ability to recover his hold of her.

He knew quite well her husband's financial status, and he was perfectly sure that money in the end would tell with her—money and the influence of the insidious Mrs. Estes, who had proved such an invaluable ally in most of his past affairs. Cathleen would be an easy conquest. That she was a coward he knew; that she was stupid he also knew, a fact which might offset her cowardice, for she would have no conception of the real danger of the renewal of their intrigue. There was danger; he knew that perfectly. There *was* a big chance involved. That a little of the old sporting Larry was left was shown by the fact that this realization but urged him on, keyed him up to the new venture in which he felt he could right himself in the eyes of his little world, and at the same time hold up to ridicule the man who had caused him so much suffering and chagrin.

Larry was discharged from the hospital four weeks from the night he had been brought there.

He made his début at the Casino fairly early the next morning. A camera man, loitering outside, tried to take his picture. This enraged Larry to the point of cursing at the offender and threatening to kick him and his infernal machine into the gutter. The incident was not unnoticed by various people entering the club at the same time, and Larry felt it an inauspicious incident with which to begin his day.

People were delighted to see him and welcomed him back with open arms, but he held almost sullenly aloof, as if detecting a latent mockery in their kind words. When people mentioned appendicitis he chafed under the word; when they failed to mention it especially, he resented the omission. He hated the people who were unduly kind and officious in making him feel at his ease. He glowered at the groups that held aloof, doing their best to treat his illness quite casually and all in the course of a Summer's season.

"But I expected you'd have it in a little glass bottle and wear it on your watch chain," said Mrs. Brittingham gaily.

"What?" said Larry, and then quite obviously showed his temper when he recognized his break.

Mrs. Brittingham let him see that she missed the flash of response with which formerly he would have met her sally.

"They didn't extract by mistake your sense of humor, did they Larry?" she queried brightly.

He did smile at that. He and Ann had really had some wonderful times together, and her eyes struck him now as keenly sympathetic.

"What are you going to do, Larry?" she asked. "Why not go away for a rest somewhere?"

"Is that a warning?" he put in quickly.

"Merely friendly advice. It would be immensely the best thing all around. You are hardly in a position yet to get a clear perspective. I am." She put it to him quite directly, but he shook his head.

"No," he said doggedly. "I'm going to stay right here."

"That's an ultimatum?"

"Absolutely."

She shrugged. "But you couldn't

work your appendix a second time."

He laughed. "Why not?"

"After all, why not?" she echoed him. "A man with sixty millions can afford to have two appendices. That was your thought, I take it."

"Yes," he admitted.

"Still secure in your millions, Larry." She shook her head ruefully as she left him. "Well—maybe you're right."

About five minutes after Larry had left the Casino, Schuyler and his wife came in. There was a general gasp. Had the two men met? That was the query that went like wild fire from group to group. And if they had escaped meeting this time, what would happen when they finally did come together?

Again speculation ran rife, and society awaited with eagerness the denouement of the affair.

But by the oddest trick of chance the two men did not meet for a month. Neither avoided the meeting, but each breathed a sigh of relief when another day passed without the inevitable encounter.

Mrs. Estes had come back from Bar Harbor. When she discovered that nothing very awful was going to happen as an outcome of the Schuyler scandal, and that society was not taking any definite stand against the people involved, she dared once again to visit the little cottage on Narragansett Avenue. With her support, Cathleen regained a little of her former sense of security, and the two had many heart-to-heart talks about the events of the last month. By degrees, Cathleen began to see herself in the light of a heroine of romance.

With Mrs. Estes by her side, the abject terror she had felt in the presence of her husband since that fatal night quite subsided, and she found herself accepting their life together as in no way different from what it had been the last five years. But she began to see herself as a much more important person than of yore. She had lived through a lurid adventure successfully; and the fact that her name had been bruited about everywhere in connection with that of the wealthiest man in the country but added to her glory, according to the new standard of values she was adopting with the aid of the wily Mrs. Estes.

The sordid details of the *liaison* and events subsequent went quite unheeded; the glamour and *éclat* of the thing were what stood out, and Mrs. John Wellington Schuyler managed in a short time successfully to psychologize herself into a belief that she had really achieved something quite remarkable, and felt herself a being created especially by the gods for rosy rapture and daring romance. This attitude was fostered very much by her intercourse with Mrs. Estes, who repeated the various bits of comment on the affair to the guileless Cathleen, and her version of these bits in no way lost anything in the telling.

"Over at the Pier yesterday at Polo, Jimmy Van Dam was overheard to say that,—etc. You know, my dear, he has always admired you, and has said time and again that if Larry weren't in the running—"

Yet again: "My dear, have you seen this week's *Town Topics*—the incomparable Mrs. Schuyler with her golden hair—"

And so on and on. Small wonder that Cathleen in all her dull stupidity should have proved the dupe!

Schuyler saw how things were going with his wife and Mrs. Estes.

He had taken a bitter dislike to that good lady at the beginning. Upon her return from Bar Harbor he had given her distinctly to understand that he had seen quite clearly through her little ruse of ill health, which she had pleaded as an excuse for her departure. He had pointed out to her that she had gone away because she was too much of a coward to stay and share disgrace with Cathleen, provided disgrace should come.

Mrs. Estes had been staggered at this direct dealing, had tried to evade the issue and pass the matter off as a bit of jocundity on the part of her best

friend's husband, but Schuyler had forced his point.

"I'm not blaming you. Self-preservation is the keynote of the age. I simply want you to know that"—he smiled a little and dropped easily into slang—"that I'm on."

At which Mrs. Estes had given a semblance of a smile and gone upstairs to Cathleen. There was much John Schuyler would have to answer for in the future.

Schuyler had deliberately put aside all business worries to settle satisfactorily his domestic affairs. He knew now that it was very close to the time that he had set in his mind for the public declaration of his business status. And yet he so realized that the thrashing of Larry Walters had complicated rather than settled his present difficulty that he allowed himself a month more in which to let things run their course at Newport.

For he knew of a certainty that Larry was making efforts again to meet Cathleen.

He knew that Cathleen was ready to meet any advances made to her from that direction, and he knew that Mrs. Estes was aiding and abetting them both.

Again the cold-blooded, analytical side of the man came into play and he almost enjoyed his part in the game as he played it slowly and cautiously, and yet with a strange wonder in his heart as to the outcome of it.

Cathleen's methods were dully obvious. He surprised her one day with a letter in her hand at the post-box at the corner. He politely opened the box and she slid the thing in, but the address had stood out a distinct black scrawl, against the white of the paper.

He smiled in an amused way, and she in her stupidity judged that she had tricked him. Subtlety was always quite lost on her. The butler with the crafty leer had been dismissed, but the new one, although Schuyler himself had selected him, seemed not above suspicion.

Schuyler surprised many little whispered conferences and enjoyed keenly the confusion of the two guilty ones. Cathleen never went out alone, so that he was sure—quite sure—that as yet she had not succeeded in meeting her lover.

There had been many little attempts to run over to Marie Estes's to tea, but Schuyler, having so much time on his hands, was always more than glad to escort her. A clever woman would have found a hundred ways to accomplish her end and to thwart him in his scheme, but Cathleen struggled dully and helplessly and succeeded in not one of her attempts.

The only thing that lightened the dreary round of espionage for Schuyler was his almost daily talk with Mrs. Brittingham in the morning at the Casino.

While Cathleen played tennis, Schuyler and Ann Brittingham sat and talked, and it was remarkable the amount of ground they succeeded in covering in those morning interviews. He recognized her ready grasp of ideas, her fine intuitive powers and her delicate sympathy. She saw in him the one splendid specimen of a sex she had judged up to now all too decadent. There was a directness in their intercourse that was infinitely daring, for each was quite ruthless in the probing of the other's mind and in searching out and dragging to the light unsuspected little strengths and weaknesses. It was startling; it stimulated; it was of the nature of an unusual adventure.

John Wellington Schuyler, who had always regarded women as more or less of the species of parasite, found himself now face to face with a personality of sufficient strength to grip him and influence his every thought. He saw his attitude toward his wife and her lover entirely through Ann Brittingham's eyes. She had accepted as absolute his past action in the matter; he knew of a certainty she awaited the dénouement with a sense of perfect security in his right decision and spirit that denied all compromise. As he looked into her clear eyes he regained

a little his own faith in himself and felt confident of the future.

But as time went on he began to feel other things, too, as he looked into those eyes, so ready to meet his in their directness, for Ann Brittingham was too much of a woman not to render intimacy of this sort a dangerous thing. She knew her *metier de femme* too well, or was she really for once in her gay, reckless life quite honest in her desire to help this man whose uprightness so compelled her admiration? Perhaps the good and bad in Ann's make-up had become so hopelessly entangled in her last ten years of intriguing that she herself did not quite know.

But as she looked more and more deeply into the eyes of John Schuyler she felt a strange eagerness that was half desire and half a tremulous apprehension as to something that threatened. Schuyler was too big a man to go on the rocks. And yet—

There was a corresponding struggle in Schuyler's mind, and yet not once did he question Ann's attitude in the matter.

Her words in almost their first interview had stayed with him always. "I couldn't have forgiven you had you fallen. *That* would have been of the nature of a compromise."

So he had deemed that her interest in him lay only in the impregnability of his will, and he determined at all costs to live up to what she expected of him.

And so he tried to fight down those strange stirrings he felt within him when they looked at each other. Her physical charm was a potent one and he found himself dwelling with intensity on the beauty of her. The slight figure, the olive skin and the dark eyes shadowed by the wonderful lashes! She was the sort to compel a grand passion, and Schuyler had to keep himself well in hand as they met day by day.

He found himself too surely unstrung at the end of each interview, but he fought to hide his lack of self-control and to keep things on the purely platonic basis she had advocated so strongly. For, after all, it was the living up to the high ideal she had of him that was to be his salvation.

They were sitting together one day on the Horse Shoe piazza of the Casino. There was a touch of fall in the air, and everything seemed to denote that the end of the season was at hand. Ann Brittingham was looking a bit fagged, and Schuyler felt unduly tender as he studied the slender droop to her figure and the dark circles under her eyes.

"Yes, I am tired," she admitted.

Then, meeting the warmth of his eyes, she sighed and turned away. Then she turned back quickly with an odd, appealing little gesture.

"Ah, no, John Wellington. I want you always as you are—inexorable—adamantine—incapable of compromise."

The moment was fraught with a strange intensity.

She struggled to lighten her tone, but it was difficult, for she realized quite fully the sacrifice she was making. The thing she wanted was within her grasp and she found herself suddenly strong enough to put it away from her.

She rose suddenly. "Don't you see? Ah, you must see! Passion has run so riot in my life. I couldn't bear to have you just one of the others."

There were tears in her eyes. "It is better never to have had ideals at all than to have had them and lost them."

She smiled a little ruefully at her didacticism and put out both hands.

He took them and found himself trembling violently. They stood so a second, and then she turned and left him.

A man incapable of compromise! These words were still echoing in his mind as he turned to meet his wife and Mrs. Estes coming up the path.

"Did we interrupt a *tête-à-tête?*" asked Mrs. Estes tartly.

Schuyler ignored this remark as unworthy of notice.

"Are we going to Bailey's?" said Cathleen apathetically.

"You go, if you like," he answered. "I shall take an afternoon on the yacht."

There was a second's pause; it was

the first time since Larry had been discharged from the hospital that Cathleen had been allowed her freedom. Her eyes met those of Mrs. Estes in a startled way; then both women gave themselves up to a feigned indifference.

"You'll be back for dinner?" said Cathleen.

"Oh, yes!"

Schuyler had taken in all the little by-play.

He knew, of course, that Larry and Cathleen would meet that afternoon, but for once he didn't care.

Decisions were beginning to press close about him and he felt he had to get away by himself and think.

CHAPTER VI

SCHUYLER came back from a five hours' sail on his yacht refreshed in body, mind and soul. By the light of Ann Brittingham's faith in him he had seen quite clearly what his future conduct would be. He would take the open road, throw aside trickery and espionage and face Larry with straight facts, put it up to him as a point of honor between man to man to keep out of the game and give him, Schuyler, the opportunity to win back his wife to a sense of honor and decency.

Once he had thought it all out, it seemed quite simple, and he wondered at the days and nights he had spent in uncertainty of decision as to what to do.

The world seemed a kindlier place to him after that afternoon's sail. He thought of Ann tenderly. So the physical had been in play with her, too, and her struggle had matched his own.

But her admiration of him as standing for a principle had been greater than her desire for him as a mere man. How little the world knew of the real Ann Brittingham! And Larry, he was sorry for Larry! If report spoke truly he had taken the best out of him; a repetition of that thrashing would spell cowardice, perhaps.

And then he began to realize he had been unfair to Cathleen.

He had condemned her, and why? Not for her sin—there would have been justification in that attitude—but for her stupidity. He had been looking at the thing entirely from the viewpoint of personality, and the morality involved he had let escape him. It had been perhaps much ado about nothing, but the road ahead now stretched out clear and distinct.

He faced his bankruptcy, too, once more. For the last few weeks the idea of that had seemed almost intolerable. The living of a narrow existence in dull routine with the woman he now knew Cathleen to be had seemed more than his nerves, already overstrained, were capable of standing. And yet, that there was any other course open to him had never occurred to him. Cathleen was his, for better or worse; she was the mother of his child, and he knew that they must somehow or other fight out their destinies side by side. Divorce was not among the possibilities he had dealt with.

But as he drifted out to the blue horizon that afternoon, the future seemed to hold forth many bright hopes, not the least of which was the awakening of a finer perception of moral values in the mind of his wife and a careful supervising of the upbringing of the little Betty.

On his way home late that afternoon he stopped at one of the clubs for a drink. Conversation lulled a bit as he appeared, but the buzz soon began again. A snatch of talk here, a snatch there, and Schuyler learned that Larry was the theme of gossip. He had attempted his first game of polo that afternoon, his first since his illness, with the result of getting very much winded in the first quarter and of taking a nasty cropper in the second.

"He's not the same man," said one. "He went off and got drunk directly afterwards," said another.

As Schuyler left the club, with its round of gossip, he felt his good spirits suddenly ebb. The picture of Larry, sodden with drink, was not a pleasing one. It was the old Larry that he had been dealing with that afternoon in his

mind, and he wondered as he walked slowly home how far afield his afternoon's calculations would prove to be in the final settling.

Cathleen was dressing for dinner, so he did not disturb her, but went directly to his own room. At seven he went down to the library. Mrs. Estes was announced and Cathleen appeared at the same instant.

Schuyler recognized in a second with infinite disgust that both women had been drinking rather heavily.

Mrs. Estes was flushed and garrulous; Cathleen presented a dull apathy and glassy stare.

There was obviously some excitement in the air and Schuyler felt a cold dislike as he looked at them, for they were capable of being so little clever. Cathleen had, of course, seen Larry; he had known that she would when he left her, but somehow that had slipped out of his mind during the afternoon and he now felt almost savage in face of the fact.

But he managed to control himself and respond to the flat inanities of his wife and the would-be scintillations of their guest.

"We went to polo," said Cathleen.

"Did the Westchester play full team?" Schuyler didn't care who played, but the topic was as good as any other.

"Yes," cut in Mrs. Estes. "Larry Walters played for the first time since his illness."

It was meant to be a daring *coup*, but somehow or other Mrs. Estes' voice tapered to a point at the end, and the remark was sapped of any boldness she might have originally planned upon. Her hostility to her host was only intensified as she met weakly his steady eyes and felt her voice wavering quite pitifully.

"I know," answered Schuyler. "He had rather a bad fall in the second quarter, I believe, and got drunk directly after."

"Oh!" Mrs. Estes looked away and Cathleen turned to give some direction to the butler. Conversation lulled.

Mrs. Estes was seized with another inspiration. She wanted to hurt Schuyler, and she was quite ready to resort to any means to do so. His very calmness and impregnability but goaded her on to greater lengths.

"Mrs. Brittingham was there," she said archly.

"Indeed!" ejaculated her host.

"Alone!" she continued. "An unheard of thing for Ann! But the fact is, she's between affairs!"

Schuyler felt himself compelled to answer.

"I see," he said, "a sort of interregnum."

"Exactly!" Mrs. Estes gathered herself together before making her final spring. "She is boasting at present that *you* are to be the next in order."

Mrs. Estes for once had the advantage, for Schuyler had been taken quite unawares. The two hung mute for almost a full minute, hatred and distrust in their eyes. Then Mrs. Estes laughed lightly.

"I'm warning you as a friend. Ann Brittingham is a dangerous woman. Her methods are varied. No doubt she is putting you on a very high pedestal at present, so that the crash in the end will be the louder."

She smiled sympathetically at Cathleen, who, strange to say, had seemed not to follow this little spar between her husband and her guest.

"Ann was with Larry the latter part of the afternoon. They were betting quite heavily and"—Mrs. Estes drove her point home with a cruelty that had in it something almost of the sinister; all the hatred and venom that had been gathering these many weeks seemed concentrated in this last thrust—"and it was *not* on the match."

"Oh!" The word was wrung from Schuyler in spite of himself. The thrust had gone home, and he felt suddenly weak. He lacked the strength, the incentive even to attempt to retaliate.

As he looked into the eyes of Mrs. Estes—those queer green eyes that seemed to gloat maliciously over his

dumb misery—the realization came that the fight had gone out of him.

Cathleen, noticing the pause, now came to the front with some fatuous remark about Ann Brittingham's modiste, and the tension was loosed. The dinner dragged its weary length.

"We thought of going to Freebody Park tonight," said Cathleen tentatively as they all rose to leave the table. "It's the last week—"

"Go, by all means," answered her husband. "I am going to bed. It was windy on the yacht. I have a little neuralgia."

It was with difficulty that he could speak coherently.

Left alone, he went to his room and sat by the window.

For a long time he listened to the break of the distant ocean, and let himself be lulled by its ceaseless murmur. And then he began to think. And always there was that picture in his mind, clear cut and distinct: the picture of Ann and Larry, betting, betting. She had been playing with him, after all, and her faith in him that had been his lode-star during these weeks of terrible indecision had resolved itself into a mere fleshly passion. Possibly not even that! Larry had been her latest lover. Perhaps it was a clever scheme to trick him into a counter affair, and so save Larry a second thrashing.

He saw her renunciation that last day as an elaborate piece of acting. Another move in the game to bring about his inevitable downfall. And that afternoon she had been betting on the outcome of it all and laughing and mocking.

Schuyler faced all the facts deliberately. There was no wild protest in his heart this time; only a dull, helpless despair. Life stretched ahead of him, gray, monotonous, hopeless, and he saw only the inevitable rottenness of things. Yes, the fight had gone out of him. And then Ann Brittingham's words came back to him. "It is better never to have had ideals at all than to have had them and lost them."

He sat thinking dully until three in the morning. Then he heard Cathleen come in. That roused him a little. He knew, of course, that she had been with Larry. But what odds? Then a new thought seized him, and he sat rigidly upright and a slow, almost sinister, smile spread over his face.

For an hour he sat there in the thrall of his new idea; then, swallowing a drug he happened to have, he threw himself heavily on the bed.

Schuyler slept until noon. Cathleen was a bit nervous at luncheon; she wasn't perfectly sure how much her husband guessed of her meeting with Larry the previous evening and she was over-officious and unduly explanatory. But Schuyler paid little heed to her; he seemed to be dwelling in a world quite apart and answered most vaguely when appealed to on any point.

"I should like to go to Narragansett for the polo tomorrow," she said.

He did not seem to hear her.

She considered a repetition for a second, and then said it again.

"Oh, yes!" He came out of his reverie. "I was about to suggest it. I am going to spend a couple of days on the yacht. Why don't you take that time at the Pier? A change might do you good."

She looked at him in a frightened way, but the steady eyes that met hers told her nothing.

"I'll wire the Imperial for rooms if you say so."

She was torn between a queer apprehension that she felt as to this unexpected leniency and a strong desire for the two days' excitement at the Pier. She hesitated weakly.

"I'll telegraph at once," he said.

Cathleen left about three. Schuyler looked at her scrutinizingly as she left. She was growing stouter, unquestionably, and looked cheaply over-dressed. He was suddenly conscious that he was sorry for her.

"Good-bye," he said almost kindly and took her hand.

"Good-bye," she said in a flat voice and with her little forced smile.

A short while later Schuyler started

for his yacht. On the way he dropped in at his club. He found himself so often strangely down these days, and whiskey and soda furnished just the necessary exhilaration.

He took a couple of drinks at the bar and then went out and sat on the piazza. It was the driving hour and Society was *en pageant*.

He sat there as in a trance and watched the steady stream of carriages and motors, and the futility of that gay procession, so perfectly appointed, gripped him and held him. And yet—the ease and luxury were something of an anesthetic to lull the restless pain and unhappiness that seemed the inevitable lot of all humanity. He had always had money; could life be bearable without it? He wondered. Most of the faces of the people passing were familiar ones—the people he knew in town, on Long Island, the same people who had watched so intently his own little drama that summer and had condoned or condemned, each according to his light.

Ann Brittingham passed. The brilliant smile she flashed at him cut him to the quick and he winced. He rose quickly and again went in to the bar. It was the rush hour. At tables all around the room were gathered groups of men, playing cards, talking, drinking, and there was a chaos of noise.

Schuyler stood at the bar and lost himself in the babble and confusion.

And then he was suddenly conscious that the noise had stopped.

As he roused himself he caught a glimpse of his own rather set face in the glass back of the bar and of a startled countenance directly beside it.

He turned and faced—Larry Walters; it was the first encounter.

Schuyler threw off his apathy in a second and stood forth cold-blooded and calculating, primed to meet this last emergency fittingly, and with a full realization that the attention of every member of the club was centered upon him.

There was a minute of taut expectation.

"How do you do, Larry?" said Schuyler, and held out his hand.

Larry Walters flushed crimson and held back. But, fearing to be ridiculous and with a furtive glance at the watchful faces in the background, he at length held out his hand and responded rather weakly to Schuyler's substantial grip.

"Have a drink?" said Schuyler.

"No, thank you," muttered Larry.

"By the way"—Schuyler's voice rang out clear and distinct—"I'm dining alone on my yacht tonight. Will you join me? You can leave early if you're dated up."

Was Schuyler trying to bury the hatchet? Or could it be—was it a second challenge?

All this flashed through Larry's mind as he hung fire and muttered something that was harsh and indistinguishable. He could make nothing out of the cool, easy eyes that were looking quite steadily into his and compelling his attention in spite of himself. And always there was that terror of being mocked at, of being set down as a coward by these men gathered so carelessly about and obviously enjoying his confusion. Those faces brought back to him the sinister throng ever present in his delirium, and goaded him to make a sudden stand for his courage and to prove his identity with the old Larry who courted anything that smacked of adventure. He pulled himself together. The two men standing there face to face achieved a consummate piece of acting.

"Dinner on the *Spindrift!* I'd jolly well love it! I've changed my mind about the drink. What will you have?" Larry was masterful.

The two men leaned easily on the bar and chatted and conversed. They had joined forces to fool their audience, keyed up to the expectation of heroics, and that bond made them feel almost friendly. Ten minutes later they went out together, showed themselves to the people grouped on the piazza, and then leisurely got into Schuyler's motor.

"To the Yacht Club!" said Schuyler.

CHAPTER VII

"COFFEE outside!" said Schuyler, and the two men rose from the table and sauntered leisurely to the lounging deck. The *Spindrift* was a wonderful yacht, with every possible appeal to the sensuous man. The dinner had been an excellent one, the wines choice. Conversation had gone without effort; each had vied with the other in ease of attitude and general badinage. To a casual observer it might have been any dinner, any night, on any of the numerous yachts drawn up here and there in the shelter of the harbour.

"I congratulate you on your chef," said Larry, as he seated himself in one of the luxurious wicker chairs of the deck, "and your wines."

He helped himself to a liqueur and then settled back with seeming content.

But he was far from feeling quite at his ease.

Something was imminent; the conviction of that had been growing upon him all through the dinner, and he now realized from the excitation of his own nerves and the peculiar gleam in his host's eyes that the psychological moment was at hand.

"Let's put out for an hour's run. There's something of a breeze. What do you say?" asked Schuyler, and then gave the order before Larry had time to answer.

The two sank back into their chairs and vaguely watched the hoisting of the sails. The yacht poised easily for a minute, hesitated, and then gave herself up gracefully to the direction of her white wings. The motion of the boat was at first hardly perceptible, but gradually the breeze quickened and the two men were conscious of the salt air in their faces and of palpable movement. The lights of the inner harbour twinkled and were gone; the outer harbor gleamed and passed, and soon they were plunged into the vast gray of the ocean, with the faint glimmer of the lights of Narragansett straight ahead.

"Yes, the material man must be satisfied"—Schuyler roused himself from the heavy reverie into which he had fallen and reverted to Larry's last remark as to his chef.

Then he turned direct and faced his guest.

"Larry, you have been attempting to meet my wife for a month."

He put it as a fact, not as an accusation, but Larry felt himself go white from the sheer drop of the thing.

"You met her yesterday at polo. She was with you last night. She got in at ten minutes past three."

Larry made inarticulate noises, but Schuyler continued to state his case with all the legal precision his lawyer might have used in summing up a matter in court.

"No doubt you've heard rumors as to my financial situation? I am on the verge of bankruptcy." Schuyler looked at his guest and there was almost a sinister shrewdness in his eyes. "Do you see any connection?"

Larry shook his head. He was struggling to be calm, struggling to think, but the whole situation seemed a hopeless blur, and he felt helpless and bewildered in following this new tack.

"I'll put it starkly," continued Schuyler. "I need five hundred thousand dollars—that amount would pull me through. Make me your check and—" he smiled a little and indicated with a wave of his hand the lights of the Pier growing larger and larger, glimmering maliciously. "Cathleen is there at the Imperial. Your check and—you can be in Narragansett in twenty minutes."

That penetrated even Larry's blunted sensibilities. He sprang to his feet with an oath. The two men faced each other.

Then, thinking he must have misconstrued, Larry stammered, "I misunderstood. You mean—divorce?"

"Oh, no!" answered Schuyler coolly; "she's not worth the trouble—"

"Then—you're selling her?"

"Why not?"

"Good God!"

"Why not?" John Schuyler was insistent. "You have not always been over-particular in your distinctions, Larry—"

The latter clenched his fists and took an unsteady step forward, but Schuyler's quiet eyes kept him off.

"Sell her? Your—your wife—?" was all Larry could articulate.

Schuyler shrugged.

"No longer my wife—merely a woman—a bit of damaged goods. Not the nicest transaction in the world, I admit," he continued after a second's pause, "but an arrangement of this sort would save me the trouble of giving you another thrashing."

Larry cowered a little at that and felt his disadvantage as his eye took in Schuyler's six feet two. He knew quite surely Schuyler's physical gauge.

With the wild surge of anger at the discovery that he'd been tricked there had come also terror, a strange numbing sensation. He felt himself so utterly at the mercy of this man who had already taken the best out of him. He staggered a little and then clung desperately to the rail.

"But by God! Half a million!" he muttered. "It is a hold-up."

"Half a million, exactly! Of course, *she's* not worth it. *It's my honor and my ideals I'm cashing in—*"

But at that he weakened and rubbed his hands across his eyes.

Larry did not notice this sudden drop. He was looking at the lights of the Pier and there was a sullen hatred in his heart—hatred for this man who was forcing his hand—hatred for the woman who was waiting for him over there. He would go to her—oh, yes!—he'd make the most of his part in this wretched bargain—but already he felt himself sated with her blonde stupidity.

He turned to find Schuyler completely master of himself.

"Well?" he asked.

"All right," Larry muttered sullenly. "I'll telegraph my lawyer to meet you in the morning. You trust me that far—"

Schuyler nodded and turned away with a sigh that belied his outward calm. He took a turn up and down the deck and then returned.

"Shall we make a landing at the Pier, or do you prefer to go in the launch?"

Larry was breathing heavily and still clutched the rail. Realizing suddenly the sorry figure he must present, he straightened himself and tried to affect indifference.

"It's immaterial," he shrugged.

The launch was lowered. The two men leaned over the side of the rail and watched the preparations. No word was spoken. As Larry was about to leave, Schuyler asked him, after a slight hesitancy: "What was it you and Ann Brittingham were betting about at polo yesterday?"

The evening had been fraught with so many surprises for Larry that one more did not seem to count.

"Betting—yesterday?" He shook his head. "I haven't seen Ann since the day after I left the hospital."

Schuyler uttered a queer gurgling sound.

"All ready, sir," said the captain.

The two men shook hands formally and Larry went down to the launch. Schuyler watched it till it became a mere speck in the distance, then watched it return.

"New York!" he said to the captain.

If a man never has ideals, and lives according to the easy morality of his age, the world accepts him. But when a man has ideals, suffers and agonizes for them, and in the end gives in, the world mocks and points at him a finger of scorn.

"It is better never to have had ideals than to have had them and lost them."

As John Schuyler sailed away that night from the glittering lights of Narragansett he looked out into the seaward gray ahead of him and wondered.

The lights passed and the little yacht quivered as it struck the first swelling wave of the open ocean.

THE TIME TO DIE

By Augustus Carlton

ONCE I thought I knew just when I would want to die—when I would accept the dictum of fate with the utmost resignation and contentedly close my account with life—my books in perfect balance. It was to be when my pulse failed to quicken at sight of a saucy smile—when my blood would not surge as a vagrant breeze gently and lovingly toyed with the skirts of a fair, slender maid, revealing to my enraptured gaze that elusively delicate curve above the ankle, tantalizingly concealed in the swirl of skirt; when I could sit at the Metropolitan and keep my heart still as I viewed the entrancingly soft, bare arms of alabaster whiteness, lovely throats and penumbra of bosoms losing themselves in gorgeous, bejeweled bodices.

Then would I care no longer for existence. I could not contemplate a scheme of dwelling on this sphere in which I would not thrill at the alluring charms of the beautiful feminine.

So I had thought; so I had planned. But that was all before yesterday.

Yesterday was a dream of soft, cool and cooing breezes—of a gentle, smiling sun. It was a day of tender thoughts and swelling emotions. It was a day of inspiration.

I picked up my walking-stick and went for a jaunt along the drowsy country wood. I was filled with ambitious thoughts and amorous ones; all nature seemed inspired. I sang snatches of song; no matter how unmusical, there was no one to hear, unless the great red-headed woodpecker boring away at an ancient tree, might be considered. He closed his labors and eyed me. I stopped and talked to him. What prompted such action I don't know—something more than a mere whim. I am superstitious about birds; they seem such wise, knowing, fascinating creatures.

As I was about to proceed, I looked down, and there, of all spots, lay a playing card, face downward. I stood and debated as to whether or not I would turn it over. Certain cards are good luck; others bad. With my cane I flipped the card over. It was the Queen of Hearts. And my own heart leaped because this card represented the queen of love.

With a certain inexplicable joy in my soul, I was about to start on again, when I discovered two other cards in the dusty road, a little way along, also face downward. Would I leave well enough alone, rejoicing in my luck, or see just what cards they were? What if they were clubs—unlucky and murderous in their significance?

Very cautiously I reversed the first one.

Great god-of-luck, it was the ace of hearts.

Then, encouraged, I turned the other.

It was the ten of hearts.

What wondrous adventure of love awaited me, I wondered. I looked about to see if there were any more cards. There were none, but I came to a lane that wound its way into a woodland. The sun shone on a bright object in the path. I bent over to see it. It was a pin, but its point was directed ahead of me. Where a pint points, there lies good fortune. I was filled with ecstatic delight. What romance lay along the road?

I sauntered down the path into the

cool shelter of great, generous trees and eventually came upon a refreshing brook. Here was a place to rest and dream, and I followed the little stream until I found an open space where the sun shone down and transformed the water into a dazzling gem of silver and gold.

I stretched out at full length and gazed in reverie at the cerulean canopy above me. I dozed off watching the evanescent clusters of fleecy clouds glide by, but suddenly I was awakened by the sound of girlish voices.

I raised myself cautiously on my elbows to look about. On the other side of the brook sat three maidens. What dainty creatures they were! Visions of pink and white in their diaphanous summery frocks. Their cheeks were like peach-bloom and their golden hair shone gorgeously as it caught the sunlight. The music of their laughter was as enticing, as seductive as the strains of the violins in the Venusberg scene in Tannhäuser.

My three cards! The queen, the ace and the ten of hearts! Oh, subtle hand of destiny! Oh, capricious fate! Nevermore will I curse thee. I remained very still, revelling in this vision of poetry and grace.

One of them suddenly bent over and removed her dainty pink slippers; then following her impulse, the others did the same.

Should I steal away silently? After Fate herself had directed my footsteps here?

Three pairs of pink-stockinged limbs, slender and graceful and delicately fashioned, stole into view, and in another moment my nymphs of the brook stood erect. Gathering up their skirts, they danced with youthful abandon on the soft grassy carpet.

Not until they advanced to the water's edge did they observe me. They were about to dip into its crystal coolness, but at sight of their interloper, they screamed and dropped their skirts. One of them, the boldest and most beautiful, looked at me fearlessly. Then she laughed, and again lifting her skirts, stepped into the water.

"Come on, girls," she called. "It's only an old man."

Once I thought I knew just when I would want to die. It was to be when the fascinating loveliness of woman no longer thrilled me.

But that was all before yesterday. Then it is too late. And I am just rounding forty. . . .

WHEN a man commits a sin he says, How shall I conceal this? When a woman commits a sin she says, How can I let my friends know of it without bragging?

BETWEEN two women of equal beauty, always pick the one who closes her eyes when she kisses you. She's not so likely to think you want to marry her.

THE final definition of love is something that gives pain without hurting. Those are the pains that hurt the worst

EVERYONE DOES IT ONCE

By Paul Hervey Fox

GEORGE FORREST, up from the city on his way to Port Triton, lay comfortably back in his chair and attempted to visualize personalities in Mrs. Hampton's "house party on the water." The drowsy, languorous landscape that lay, svelte and blinking like some monstrous cat, under the sun of early Summer received his abstracted attention as the train rolled on towards his destination.

Mrs. Hampton—one of the Gordon Hamptons—had written him in her characteristically airy manner a week before. She wanted to know if he wouldn't be good enough to include himself among her guests for a ten days' sail in her new motor houseboat.

They would cruise the shores and adventure the inlets and have a jolly, Bohemian time. She would take her butler along—of course!—but they must be sure to address him as "Steward!" And they should sleep in such dinky little cabins. And Forrest must see the baby grand piano that she had squeezed below decks with the aid of the carpenters.

And really, the best of the best had already agreed to join. She appended their names in a terse list. "So do come, George! You'll be allowed to do whatever you like."

The appeal was unnecessary. There is fascination even in a puddle for the sensitive soul; and the strange, intangible charm of streams and seas shall remain forever among the elemental mysteries.

So Forrest, though he felt that thirty-five was the age to retire as a man of pleasure, and seek the consolations of philosophy and a quiet routine, had packed his bags and left the sentimental temple of his rooms. His health had grown more exacting of late. He had begun to count his drinks and limit his cigars and go through an atrocious parody of exercise.

"Every man," it has been said, "is either a fool or a physician at forty"; and Forrest was already enjoying the melancholy study of his lesser ailments.

He descended from the train at noon, and with a station disreputable porting his grips behind him, directed his steps toward the beach. A tender waited him there with a man who respectfully touched his hat and murmured, "Mr. Forrest?" in a tone of urbane deference. As he was rowed out to the *Miranda*, Forrest smiled at Mrs. Hampton's employment of the adjective "Bohemian."

"Dear George! How good of you! And you've come prepared to rough it?" his hostess asked, as he stood before her on the lower deck. "Though of course we shall stop here and there among civilized friends with comfortable places on the share . . . What do you think of *Miranda?* Isn't she too sweet?"

"Attractive," said Forrest smiling; "she's so plump and so white. But there's an air of propriety and virtue about her that makes me wonder at the name."

"*Miranda?* Why, it's appropriate, George! Haven't you noticed that all fat old ladies have such impossible and romantic names? . . . Come! Luncheon's ready, and I do want you to meet all the clever people. The party is really too sweet!"

They lunched under the awning on the upper deck as the *Miranda* lay riding idly at anchor in the little roadstead.

The neat white table that had been set up, the cool, savory courses, the chattering, charming people, made Forrest heartily glad that he had come. It was pleasant to consider with a gentle sorrow that even now other people were starving and unkempt and miserable. It is at once shocking and obvious that the loveliness of luxury consists chiefly in our unconscious realization of the existence of want.

Forrest looked about him, like a critic in a picture-gallery, comparing individuals with Mrs. Hampton's catalogue of them.

He glanced from the two big Hampton boys, lazy and likable, across the table down to Old Hampton at one end who had never quite lost his broker's air, and still referred to the business of offering the particular intoxicant called champagne in the general phrase of "opening wine." Then there were Natalie Heath and Fanny Craig, sophisticated girls who smoked cigarettes all day long and were cynically sex-wise. And Clyde Stannington with his drawl and sulky smile; Dickie Edgeborn, the butterfly, who wept like a woman when he was not perched upon the peaks of gayety; and Mrs. Lechesne, whose tragedy was that she had a Washington Square North face and a Washington Square South soul. Forrest's gaze swept about to his side, and there, for a moment, remained in speculation.

He remembered the name: Felicity Marlow. Mrs. Hampton had done her the honor of a line of explanation in her note . . . "my poor, dear niece to whom the trip will be such a treat."

Forrest loathed poor relations. They always spoke in cold tones about an "attitude towards life" and a "moral duty," and always looked envious. Their poverty, he was sure, was a punishment for their self-righteousness.

But he had bowed to Miss Marlow quite oblivious of the preliminary impression or, indeed, of any at all. And now he had an opportunity of closer classification.

She was pretty with the prettiness of youth and frailty. Frailty was the word! Her dainty little body with its tender curves and delicate bones gave her a touch of something exquisite and perishable. Her swimming eyes looked at times green, at times blue, and the sunlight shook down a golden powder on the soft, light hair. Forrest touched a ruminant finger to his lips, and decreed that if he were to flirt, it should be in this quarter.

With the flicker of a faint smile he uttered some casual sentence.

He noticed that when she answered she turned her face towards him with a direct, with a studying scrutiny.

"Now she'll drop her lashes and turn her face away from me," thought Forrest with ironic knowledge.

But she didn't. Her troubled stare rested upon Forrest with all the wondering concentration of a child. It was, said Forrest, a magnificent simulation of innocence. The girl could act; she was—by thunder!—worth cultivating.

Anchor up, the *Miranda* moved that somnolent afternoon through new waters, tightly skirting the angular coast. Forrest sat in a wicker-chair in the bow, puffing the sweeter smoke of a forbidden cigar. The sound of laughter from the stern floated to him in vague segments disparted by the wind. Mrs. Lechesne hung in a dreamy trance over a novel, and turned no page; Clyde Stannington glared over the side with a kind of remote anger at the inscrutable face of the waters; and from random directions the clear light voice of Mrs. Hampton was heard damning a multitude of things as "too sweet."

A chair squeaked, and Forrest looked up to see Miss Marlow.

His eyes lighted up with invitation.

He had cultivated a horror for the banal, and yet he had a strange desire to address her as "poor little thing."

He grinned at his absurdity; the girl must be a superb pretender so cleverly to convey that impression of unworldliness.

Ordinarily he would have fished for information in facetious sallies, but here he found himself asking questions with a bluntness that astonished him. Her

answers were quite too simple and artless. The suspicion grew in Forrest's mind that he was face to face with that great mythical character, *the ingénue*. Poor little thing, indeed! Forrest felt protective—of some one besides himself.

It was a new sensation.

II

THEY rested that night in the mouth of a minor estuary; and after dinner, at which Mrs. Hampton was "Bohemian" in an elaborate gown, Dickie Edgeborn played ragtime with infectious hilarity, and Clyde Stannington sang nautical ballads with his eyes fixed sternly on the ceiling. Mrs. Hampton was good enough to think each of them really too sweet. After that came bridge and bottles and bed.

Forrest felt a trifle encaged the next day. He was, after all, too mature for such junketings, he thought, and he wondered if the trip wasn't going to prove tedious. Why not a self-sent telegram at the next harbor town, recalling him to his rooms? But no! he'd wait a while and see what happened.

In the meantime it would be diverting to study this Marlow child and be human. Already instinct was asserting itself among the others, and the process described as "twosing" had commenced.

It so happened that he saw Felicity for a protracted space on that very afternoon. The *Miranda* was drawn up after luncheon and the youth of the party had embarked in the dory with fishing-rods and satiric songs. Forrest sneaked below during the havoc of departure and sought what Mrs. Hampton was inclined to call the ship's library. She was one of those people to whom the chiefest duty of literature is to be *useful*: a thing, say, to annotate the margins of a gift-calendar, or to serve as the *raison d'être* of a strip of handsome leather. Forrest cursed the even, gaudy backs of the standard authors, and regretted that he had not brought along a book or two of his own.

"Won't you read me something? . . . I feel awfully lonely."

He turned to gaze into the solemn eyes of the Marlow child.

"I'd far rather talk with you," he said. "I thought you'd gone with the others."

"No. I knew you weren't going, so I didn't either."

Forrest started at this piece of frankness.

"Sit down," he said; "I want to have a long chat with you. Who's on deck? Only the oldsters?"

He realized a few minutes later that the girl was actually trying to flirt with him. He had a happy opinion of his own attractions, but he was sensible enough to know that his income was a rather larger allurement. This girl wasn't flirting for the sake of flirtation; she thought actually to ensnare him, George Forrest, the despair of matrimonial schemers, the complacent champion of the single life—save at times.

He knew the ground as thoroughly as might be, and if she wished to force the issue, he was ready to meet her half way, heaven help her!

"You funny little girl," he murmured, patting her hand; "for you are a little girl, Felicity; how on earth have we missed knowing each other before?"

He rose quietly.

"Stand up and come near me!" he commanded.

She obeyed slowly and with a ludicrously frightened manner.

"Nearer!" he urged.

He smiled into her questioning face for a long moment, then putting his arm heavily around her, he drew her close.

In the eternity of that second of approach, her eyes seemed to have taken on abnormal dimensions, and her lips trembled and fluttered like a cornered bird.

Deliberately he kissed her mouth. She made no resistance nor any sound.

At that same instant a high tide of reaction swept over Forrest's heart. He felt incredibly brutal and unfair. He picked up a cigarette from the table, scratched a light, and walked abruptly to the other end of the cabin.

Felicity sank faltering into her chair

and watched him with a scared, pondering expression. There was no one by to laugh at the amusing tableau.

When Forrest swung about he was frowning.

He snapped away his cigarette and pulled up a seat.

"Felicity," he said, "I'm going to do something which I know beforehand is an abominable folly. I'm going to tell you the truth."

"Why are you angry at me? Let me go!" she whimpered.

He shook his head gently and indulgently.

"Poor little girl!" he ejaculated in spite of himself. He wanted to tumble down her ideals with cynical information and then comfort her amid the ruins. He wanted to advise her, even while he realized that the only advice worth taking is, don't give any.

"Felicity," he murmured with his fingers resting lightly on her arm, "I'm going to say certain things to you, because they've got to be said, and because I like you very much indeed. Oh, I'd hold my tongue if I didn't find you very—very charming! The trouble with you, Felicity, is—how shall I put it?—that you're playing a game and you're playing it all wrong."

He drew himself up with a slightly oratorical air and plunged into his theme.

"I'm going to be flat and frank with you, Felicity. But try to believe that I am saying this because I want to help you. You're too innocent to begin with. A wise marriage is the thing you wish and you haven't mastered the technical maneuvers so far. Hang it! I know more of 'em than you do yourself!"

"I'm never going to marry," she said in breathless protest. "Men! How I hate them!"

Forrest grinned. "Have it your own way then, but listen to what I have to say. In the first place, if your kisses prove so easy to win, you'll have a good time—theaters, dances, and one thing and another—and you'll find yourself, in a manner, popular. But it's a losing game. The little boys that will enjoy playing around with you will go off when the time comes and marry the other girl, the girl who has been comparatively lonely and aloof."

"But what am I to do?" she questioned with the hint of a sob in her voice. "How can I make people like me?"

Forrest selected another cigarette and was subjective enough to find his task a little funny.

"Is, 'How can I make people like me?' Greek for, 'How can I force some young eligible to the point of proposal?' Probably. Well . . . Primarily you've got to chuck overboard any lingering desires you may have for romance. The time for that is after, not before, marriage. Then select your possibilities. You wish to become intimate with one or more and you say you don't know how? Nonsense! Of course you do, but doubtless you've never done it consciously. My dear child, the oldest trick, the easiest trick, is that of flattery administered almost simultaneously with the introduction!

"But—you don't keep that up after a certain point. As soon as the thing has comfortably struck home, as soon as the fellow's interested, you take the other turn. You begin to laugh at him. You wound him. You hit at the very vanity you've stirred. And—if you're able—you convey a thin shadow of doubt as to whether the cruel little things you say are honest or pretended. Keep him guessing . . .

"And occasionally—very occasionally!—you throw in just a touch of the old mood. You say, or better yet, act something with the core of a compliment. For instance: the man is about to take some risk, trivial or otherwise. He is joining a defense league, he is planning to attempt aviation, he's going on a hunting party. You've subtly insulted him all evening, but on receipt of that information you show the greatest alarm, and beg him with terror in your eyes that he won't do anything of the sort.

"As to how you're to keep him interested and yet be cool during this in-

terim, that, I'd suggest, is best solved by asking the chap silly questions. Ask him—quite seriously—what water is made of, and who is the greatest living pianist, and how football is played. Anything and everything. You'll be bored to death, but keep an eager and interested look in your eyes, and cease thinking of your newest frock just as he utters his last sentence. Men like to dispense information, and the less they know the more they offer. Look at me! I'm doing it now . . . though I flatter myself that here I do know what I'm talking about.

"Another thing: Carry out your pretense of coolness by always following an intimate meeting with a casual one. If you've described the texture of your soul under moonlight to him, offer him a careless nod the next time you run across him. Show him he's really not made any advance. Don't, of course, be bored. But be politely incredulous of his ability to interest. I add to this that you must never give anything; you must always take. The mere pleasure of your hand must be costly above rubies.

"What else? Let me see . . . Oh, you must naturally use a little jealousy. Employ a foil and be sure to appear gay and charmed when he is looking at the two of you. However, it's quite unnecessary to tell you this. You've the knowledge, or you'd not be a woman.

"What I'm truly driving at is one final important point, the keynote of your whole attitude. Be as light as you like, don't scruple to tempt, but whether you do so or not, always, under the surface, convey the idea of your great goodness! Men like women who are shocking, but they don't like those who aren't shocked. An allusion to the sacredness of motherhood, the joy of sacrifice, a touch of piety, an inner faith, a vision of the ideal—you must put such things obviously forward. Why it is I don't know, but men always demand an essential idealistic tendency in women. Accept the ways of the world, but try to look like an aggrieved nun when you do so.

"There you are! There's the recipe for capturing the elusive male. And I've been foolish enough to tell you all this, my dear, to offer you the boiled-down conclusions of my own observations, because your pathetic simplicity appeals to me. For of one thing you can be sure. If you throw yourself on men, as, quite frankly, I gather you have been doing, and make no resistance against their approaches, you'll have an awfully good time . . . But you're not likely to have anything else!"

Forrest nodded rather in the manner of one who concludes an interview.

As he did so, Felicity tugged at her handkerchief, and two large tears rolled silently down her cheeks.

"I hate myself!" she whispered. "And oh! how do you know everything? I've never met anyone like you before. You know more about women than any man I've—"

She could, apparently, restrain herself no longer. Her tears coursed more freely, her head fell forward, and her breast heaved spasmodically to an accompaniment of muffled, choking sounds.

Forrest was touched acutely by her distress. And with that the admiration for his wisdom to which she had so candidly confessed, sent him into a glow of satisfaction. How delicious, how fragile, how innocent she was!

"Felicity," he said softly, "forgive me for telling you all this, for preening myself on my knowledge and thinking so little of how it would hurt you."

He put his arm about her, and drew her face towards his.

She pulled herself away with a jerk.

"Don't—don't touch me!" she cried.

She wheeled and sped out of the cabin; Forrest scrutinized the slim flying body with an air of perplexity.

"Am I a damn fool?" he asked himself aloud as he stood there alone. "Me—a tender-hearted adviser! Why, I never even tried to reform chorus girls when I was a boy. Oh, well! Everyone does it once, I suppose . . ."

III

THAT evening at dinner Forrest noticed that the Marlow child was making up to Clyde Stannington. Her conversation, her eyes, were directed solely towards the big youth.

"The girl's shrewd," mused Forrest, as he watched the proceedings out of the tail of his eye. "Old Man Stannington will cut up well. Let me see: there are the two girls . . . but there's enough to go around. And Clyde's no rogue. He's stupid, but that's a virtue —in a husband."

He drank a silent toast to her success. He meant to speak to her after dinner. He didn't intend to refer to the conference of the afternoon, but to let that remain a hidden link over which even their lightest talk should float with a more intimate significance.

But he found, to his irritation, that he could hardly get in a word with her. She played bridge for a space with young Stannington for partner, and Forrest, watching her from his corner, distinctly heard her remark, as the boy made a blunder, that she didn't like men to be good bridge players; that among men it seemed to be only the emasculate who played with understanding.

Forrest groaned softly, but permitted himself to be flattered.

"She's taking my counsel, letter by letter," he thought.

Later in the evening he found the couple sunken in neighboring deck-chairs under the silken beauty of the Summer night.

He drew near and there succeeded a pause packed with hostile meaning. Forrest needed no audible expression of the obvious. He rose with a polite affectation of fatigue and went below.

As he bumped his elbow in his berth, he began to wonder whether, after all, she'd been wise in taking up the Stannington boy. The fellow wasn't good enough for her, and—by Jove!—he wouldn't appreciate her flower-like delicacy. How essentially she was like a flower!

Felicity Marlow! He murmured over the syllables of her name. She was—she was—and the voice of Mrs. Hampton from the corridor ended his broken attempt at description—"really too sweet."

IV

FORREST awoke early next morning, and went on deck with a pipe, to watch the mists lift and shudder on the shore. The sun came up in a fan of gold, and a mellow light rippled over the pale horizon in one expanding flush.

He was sitting there, smoking quietly, and cultivating an appetite when there was a click of small heels and Felicity strolled towards him. He looked pleased. A chat before breakfast, while the lazyheads still slept, *would* be attractive.

Then he gripped his pipe with a start. She flung him a good-humored smile, said "Good morning" in the most genial, unconcerned voice in the world, and passed leisurely by.

He was angry. So the chit ignored him so coolly, and that, after the unforgettable talk of yesterday! She ignored him! And yet she hadn't been unpleasant about it; it was an avoidance dictated, apparently, by taste, not spite.

For some minutes Forrest smoked his pipe rather too rapidly for a comfortable tongue.

He meant to have it out with her, and that very shortly.

He managed to make his place by her side that morning as the *Miranda* got under way. There was a mutable-mooded wind up, and that, allied with the clatter of the engines, did not offer many opportunities for smooth and flowing talk. Forrest bent forward, and Felicity lay back watching him with, it almost seemed, a tinge of unfathomed humor in her innocent blue-green eyes.

In spite of the fact that he had decided to avoid the subject that had transmuted acquaintanceship into intimacy, he could find nothing else to put them on a subtle footing.

"I see you've followed my sugges-

tions," he said with a suddenness that made his opening amateurish.

"Who could help following any suggestions of yours?" returned Felicity with a faint smile on her lips.

Forrest was curiously irritated.

That this bit of insipid charm should be ironic with George Forrest!

But—perhaps she wasn't laughing at him; it was hard to tell.

He went on talking; was in turn clever, gay, romantic.

And yet he had the thought that he wasn't interesting her greatly; her attitude seemed to be one of kindly tolerance with something of the calm request to be amused of one who pays for a performance.

But how, asked Forrest, had she paid? By allowing him the precious delight of her company? Forrest routed the suggestion with contempt, almost as if she had made the comment and made it audible. Delight of her company! A fallacy and a phantasm credible only to young fools like Clyde Stannington.

He lingered for half an hour, and at the end could not decide whether she admired him prodigiously or had the indecency to think him a little funny. Forrest's mood whirled about in emotional eddies; at one moment he despised her, at another he thought her delicious. At times he felt that he loved her with an intense hatred.

Towards evening the *Miranda* approached the shore and docked at a commodious boathouse which fronted the home of one of Mrs. Hampton's friends.

The party dined that evening on land, and, afterwards, their random hostess saw that the rugs were rolled back in the long living room and sought out that good-natured person who plays that others may dance.

Forrest lounged in the doorway, talking casually to Mrs. Hampton. His eyes took in the figure of Felicity, swaying by with young Stannington. She was flushed with pleasure, adorably slim and happy.

"Do you know," said Forrest suddenly, "she's really very pretty."

"Pretty?" Mrs. Hampton echoed. "My dear George, where are your eyes? She's ravishing! And what a sweet couple they make."

She sighed with speculative pleasure.

"Who?" asked Forrest sharply.

"Who? George, you're not yourself. I've noticed it, you've seemed abstracted since you've come on this trip. Can't you see how absurdly fond of each other are Clyde and the dear girl? Why, you *must* have noticed!"

Forrest stared. He was bewildered by the presence of a queer pang of envy.

So Felicity was actually in love with that young fool, Stannington—if the artless Mrs. Hampton were to be believed. In that case her interest in the boy wasn't any deliberate attempt at capture after all. And he had thought that she was merely following his advice. No doubt she had regarded that advice as the product of a dyspeptic mind, and thought no more about it.

Forrest, gazing at the couple with sombre eyes, cursed himself for an unmitigated imbecile.

As, quite late, the party left and strolled down in the direction of the boathouse, Forrest was oddly gratified to find that Felicity had joined him.

He did not question any more her right to demand entertainment in barter for her silent companionship.

He struggled to say something pertinent and personal, but for the life of him could only clack his tongue on the dully commonplace.

Felicity glanced up at the stars, pricking the soft film of blackness with multitudinous, metallic glints like bits of brass sewn upon velvet.

"Aren't they wonderful?" she whispered. "How I wish I knew their names and all about them. Where is the big dipper, Mr. Forrest, do you know? And that star with the name that always sounds Irish. Orion, I mean."

Forrest had made of astronomy a former year's mild hobby. He was delighted to parade a knowledge which could, however, hardly be called extensive. He pointed out constellations,

.rked them into groups, made classifications, and even skimmed the surface of scientific patter. In short, he was very accurate and very tiresome.

Yet somehow he felt rather keen and intelligent, and rather proud of his knowledge . . . Clyde Stannington! She was throwing herself away on that young idiot. What she wanted, what she needed was a man of wider experience, of finer perceptions, of—oh, say it and be done with it! What she needed was the twin of Mr. George Forrest! Were he a marrying man . . . and yet even if he were, she mightn't take him. Hadn't Mrs. Hampton pointed out how the land lay?

In such tossed confusion Forrest's thoughts struggled with one another as he prepared for slumber.

V

His uncertainty of judgment continued for two days further. He found, to his astonishment, that he was growing jealous of Clyde Stannington; and for himself he could make nothing out of Felicity's conduct.

During those rare moments when he found himself alone with her, she was satiric and humble in such rapid alternation that he could not put his finger to her real opinion. There was something in the very smart of her mocking appraisal that allured him further; and the perpetual query as to whether she thought him splendid or whether she thought him silly drew him steadily towards her in the vain hope of illumination.

Late on the evening of the third day following, while the *Miranda* lay moored in the shelter of a tiny promontory, Forrest felt the impulses of adventurous youth surge over him. To get away from people and the artificial restraints of civilization, if only for a moment, was his desire; and with a delicious tingle of guilt he planned to steal the *Miranda's* canoe, and venture out alone in the breathless night.

It was towards ten that this fancy caught him, and it was in this vicinity, too, that Felicity strolled over to occupy the empty chair by his side.

He confided his plan to her with something like boyish animation, and he was at once startled and delighted by its reception.

"A—alone?" she stammered. "In the canoe? The wind may blow up suddenly. And you might lose your way. And sharks and—and—oh, please, please don't do it!"

He leaned forward.

"Would it really make any difference to you?" he asked softly.

She seemed to struggle for a second over the sacrifice of her pride. "That has—that has nothing to do with it," she answered with difficulty. "But promise me you won't go. Oh, you mustn't go!"

She appeared to shudder as she looked out across the black reach of water.

Forrest was immensely flattered. Why, she must care, she must be interested! And with all this he felt the desire to be arrogantly cruel, to turn aside her protestations with a laugh, to arouse in her fears that were—that were—

"—Really too sweet," floated to his ears in the tones of that incomparable phrase-maker, Mrs. Hampton.

"I'm afraid I can't promise you," said Forrest aloud. "In fact I . . . think I'll go."

She put her hand on his arm with a nervous gesture of appeal and as quickly withdrew it.

"Oh, you are heedless!" she exclaimed.

Then she added, whispering: "If you must go, take me with you."

Forrest swung about and looked at her with a gleam in his eyes.

She gazed resolutely away and no muscle twitched under his eager survey. So she cared as much as that! Forrest felt foolishly elated. For a moment now he thought of putting the undertaking out of his mind, but a little consideration convinced him that there were, after all, more dangerous things than piloting a canoe on a dark night. And

the very fact that she had exaggerated the mild risk was in itself a palatable reflection.

Half an hour later he lowered the canoe noiselessly from the stern, and held it for Felicity to enter.

From the cabin of the *Miranda* came a thin sound of speech and laughter. Felicity and he would probably not be missed.

The water was smooth, and rippled as thickly as oil as Forrest drove the little vessel forward. Felicity lay quite still with her eyes upon the dancing lights of the *Miranda*. For some time Forrest paddled silently, pointing for the clumsy bulk of the land. He swung round a bend in the channel by a diminutive island, and it seemed as if the vivid night instantly swallowed them. They were dark specks in a dark universe.

Forrest lifted his paddle, and from the tip of the blade the water dripped with a metrical distinctness. They glided on the face of those quiet waters.

"Isn't it lovely?" sighed Felicity in a low voice which seemed attuned to the great stillness. "Somehow on a night like this I feel so much like making everyone better and truer. That sounds childish, doesn't it?"

"I understand," Forrest answered, "and it's not childish. It's very beautiful to hear you say that."

He was thinking of how miserably he had misjudged her. Here in this infinite blackness her spirit seemed alive and tangible. The innate idealism of her mind, the—almost—profound sympathy she displayed, carried him to an apex of appreciation.

He turned the canoe in an arc. So far neither sharks nor tornadoes had rendered the trip hazardous, and Felicity with feminine inconsistency, seemed to have forgotten her early terrors. Certainly she showed no fear for herself.

Talking in lowered voices, uttering little things in tones that meant far more than the sentences they carried, they headed a little later in the direction of the *Miranda*. Her lights showed small but sharp, as the canoe floated around the curve of the channel.

Forrest suddenly put up his paddle and bent forward under the high urgings of his impulses.

He put his fingers on the back of her hand.

"Felicity," he murmured, "Felicity."

"Don't touch me," she said in a hurried voice, and drew her hand free with a twist.

"My dear," said Forrest in his most paternal manner, "you don't understand!"

He wriggled forward cautiously, and, throwing his arm about her neck, leaned to kiss her.

She pushed him away with a reckless swiftness, and at the same instant lost her balance.

The canoe rocked deliriously and, aided by the bizarre attempts of its occupants at restoring equilibrium, capsized with a gurgle and a splash of spray.

Forrest was a powerful swimmer; it was one of his rare physical accomplishments. But he had already observed Felicity during the trip, and now remembered that she knew little more than how to keep herself on the surface.

In two strokes he was at her side, and had thrown one arm over her shoulder. He thought he could manage to make the *Miranda* without the dreary aid of a call for help.

To his amazement he found Felicity struggling in his grasp with all her lithe strength.

"Don't touch me!" she gasped. "Oh, how like you it was to turn the canoe over just so you could . . . Don't touch me!"

"What?" cried Forrest. "See here, don't start an argument now. If I leave you alone you'll never be able to swim to the *Miranda* by yourself."

With the one hand which was not wildly thrashing the water she attempted in a kind of fury to free herself from him.

"I don't care," she spluttered miserably; "you've no right . . . I don't care if I drown . . . Take your arm away!"

Forrest, to do him justice, in this last extremity saw the light.

"Felicity," he said, unpoetically blowing the water from his lips, "I love you and want you to marry me. Won't you, darling?"

The complete relaxation of her body in his grip was sufficiently affirmative.

Driving his disengaged arm with deep, sure strokes, Forrest ploughed his way forward in the direction of the *Miranda,* a pledged man.

VI

"To think that George Forrest is to settle down," murmured Mrs. Lechesne, fingering a cigarette in her cabin. "I suppose it was her innocent air—men always like that. But George—he was through with all that, I thought. He's seen everything in his time."

"My dear," rejoined Mrs. Hampton, "it was really startling. I thought—actually!—that Felicity was getting on so well with Clyde. And she gave me to understand it, too. But this . . . It was, as you say, so utterly unexpected."

"*I wonder how she did it,*" said Mrs. Lechesne reflectively.

"That's what bewilders me," Mrs. Hampton answered with a little gesture of perplexity. "I asked Felicity, and you know she's a—a trifle curious at times. Her reply was *so* absurd."

"What was it?"

"She smiled," murmured Mrs. Hampton sadly, "and simply said: *'He told me how.'* How odd our young girls are nowadays, don't you think? But then, really, Felicity is too sweet!"

GENESIS

By Muna Lee

I LOVE him for no starry height
Of rapt imaginings—
Our spirits will not seek out lost delight,
Nor rise on unconquerable wings.

I love him not for what he brings me,
Not for aught I shall bring—
But because violets were thick and the wind blew free,
One day in a long-vanished Spring.

IF there were only one bachelor in the world, every married woman would still think she made a mistake when she married her husband.

EXPERIENCE in man is something which is bought with the tears of plain women and the kisses of pretty ones.

THE SINS OF THE FOUR HUNDRED*

By —— ——

V

THE CLIMBERS

I

"THE wealthy class does not interest me at all."

"Society has no charms as far as I am concerned."

And so it goes.

We hear remarks of this order over and over again. But the people who protest so much are usually the ones who at heart are envious—people who would sell their souls to be really one of that gay set they mock. You may read the newspaper accounts of big social affairs with disdain (you usually do read them, however. I wonder why?) —you may scoff at the fads and follies of these people; you may condemn their morals; but, given enough money and the opportunity, and you would very soon begin to try to insinuate yourself in one way or another into their midst and would consider every smile or little attention wrested from one of them a triumph.

The minute a man makes a fortune he begins to climb. Social ambition is an outgrowth of dollar diplomacy; it is the end that pre-exists in the means. There are exceptions, of course. Our suburbs are filled with men who have made comfortable fortunes. But I repeat, the average man as soon as he begins to make money starts to climb. Prosperity in any stratum means a struggling to reach the stratum just above. The thing I wish to discuss, however, is the climber who is endeavoring to break into the so-called 400.

As I have said before, there is probably more money in America today than in all the other countries of the world put together, and there are mammoth fortunes being made every minute. A new crop of millionaires springs up at every other big deal on the Stock Exchange. Wealth is no longer the result of natural accumulation; it comes of a sudden as the result of some disturbance or other in the financial world.

So the people who come into these large fortunes have no time to become adjusted to them by degrees and naturally. They find themselves unexpectedly overwhelmed with money. What are they to do? The obvious solution is to look about at the people who have been enjoying wealth for generations, find out what they are doing with their money, imitate and then endeavor to become one of them.

The process of imitation leads our *nouveaux riches* into many absurdities. They are exploited mercilessly by all with whom they have to do—not only by the dealers and artisans of every sort who thrive upon them, but also by the members of that inner circle into which they are struggling to break.

The man of newly-got millions often contrives eventually to be put up at one of the smart clubs in New York. Here he lounges about, a target for anyone who wants to take a shot. The society

**The names of persons used in this series of articles are, of course, fictitious; all the incidents described are, however, fact.*

man condescends to pleasantries when he is looking for a tip on the market perhaps, or else falls into casual talk of investment.

Many a climber has dropped a great deal of money purposely in some crooked deal with no other idea in mind than that of conciliating some representative of a good old family who might possibly in return give him a lift into the right set. He puts his name to every paper, charitable or otherwise, that comes his way, provided the name of any well-known social light appears there too. He is a by-word with the pretty women of society who "touch" him for any amount for any cause and then forget to recognize him when they meet him afterwards.

The wife of the new millionaire has similar experiences. She is "used" on every possible occasion and then passed by. So, after a few years' struggle with apparently no results, our *parvenus* betake themselves to Paris or the Riviera, where there is greater cosmopolitanism than in New York. Here they seem to make good with a number of the right sort and hasten back to America, aflush with their continental triumphs.

What happens?

They wait for dinner invitations that never come; they send out invitations that are never accepted. Very soon they are forced to realize that their success on the other side counts for nothing in New York, and that they are exactly where they were before they went abroad.

The one thing the climber cannot brook is to be ignored. Better a direct snub than to be unnoticed! So he sees to it that he is constantly in the limelight. He pays a hundred thousand dollars for a painting, gives a sum never given before to some fresh air fund, and so on. But even so he fails to arouse the attention of the people he is aiming to attract.

The day after he has made some handsome gift to his club, he finds himself still treated carelessly by the members of that club, to say nothing of the attendants who seem not at all impressed by what he has done. His large donations are treated as a matter of course. To be sure, his generosity may be made the subject of a church sermon, but, although this may help to further his interests with the Almighty, it doesn't seem to get him anywhere at the Union Club.

So he decides to transfer operations to a smaller field where he can the more surely compel attention.

As a result he selects Newport or Bar Harbor.

The first thing he does after the move has been made with much newspaper trumpetry is to build a magnificent house as a center for his future activities. While the establishment is in preparation, he finds himself very much sought after and thinks that at last his expenditures are arousing the *éclat* and admiration they have failed to do before. At the clubs he is almost lionized. Everyone is ultra-friendly, exceedingly interested in the details of the new estate. Contracts are constantly under discussion. Young Winters, who had always ignored him at the club in town, shows true neighborly spirit and arranges a little dinner, where our worthy millionaire can meet a well-known contractor, a very dear friend of Mr. Winters. After the contracts are all given out, there is an abatement of interest, which may or may not be connected with certain gossip being bruited about in regard to commissions. Winters is reported to have boasted about his little haul and to have remarked that it was really too easy money to be any fun.

The new estate is duly completed. There often occur, as occur there will, accidents during the process for which the millionaire settles generously. And why shouldn't these little matters be given notoriety? A workman was killed in the building of a tower in one of these big residences. The widow of the man held the owner of the place up for an absurdly large settlement. The millionaire felt that he was being "done" too much this time and was prepared to fight. A prominent lawyer, a man

undoubtedly of the inner circle, took the widow's suit in hand, out of charity, so he said. He went to the millionaire, had a friendly talk with him and pointed out that he would be endangering his social chances if he held out against the widow's demands. The millionaire gave in; the matter was settled out of court. Rumor has it that the lawyer and widow divided the spoils.

The "opening affairs" given by newcomers at the various summer resorts are usually fairly well patronized. People are curious; they go to investigate, to pry. The more lavish and pretentious an affair is, the more scoffing and gossip it evokes. The host is usually content, however, if he can draw the right people, regardless of the motive that prompts their coming. Many a man who has flaunted in the newspapers the list of guests at his first affair has to fall back in the reporting of his second venture upon the "list of those invited." There is usually a sad falling off of acceptances after first curiosity has been satisfied.

II

THE climber very soon learns that things are even more difficult in a small place than in a large city, for his methods in bringing about the end desired are much more obvious and so provoke more comment.

Let us see what some of those methods are.

At Bar Harbor some years ago the need for a good Art Club was felt very strongly. There was a colony of artistic people thereabout, and no place where they could gather comfortably. A prominent society woman very artlessly mentioned the need of such a club to a man who had been struggling helplessly for several years to "get in."

"Come to tea some day and we'll talk it over," she said.

It was the first invitation to her house he had ever received.

He was willing to pay for it.

The result is the beautiful new Art League opened last summer and already the scene of many brilliant exhibits. The wife of the man who gave the club usually presides every other week at the tea table and her name is always on the list of patronesses of all affairs given there, but otherwise there have been no tangible results of the two hundred thousand dollars embodied in the gift.

Two women were heard discussing the same club one day.

"What we need is a tennis court off there under the trees," said one of them. "It would just complete the effect."

"Well, why not?" asked the second one.

"The appropriation has run out," answered the first.

They smiled at each other.

"I believe I'm lunching alone on Wednesday," said the second woman. "Oh—er—Mr. Coburn—" she called to the millionaire who was wandering about quite listlessly in the vicinity. "Are you busy, Wednesday? Will you come to lunch? A *tête-à-tête*, you know—just to celebrate this—"

She indicated with a wave of her hand the club in all its trig completeness, "this triumph of yours."

She smiled into his eyes prettily.

Although the man knew her ulterior motive could be figured out in terms of the almighty dollar, he accepted the invitation with avidity. He was beginning to learn that invitations worth while came high. The tennis court was completed a month later. But the *tête-à-tête* luncheon has never been repeated.

Women of the *parvenu* are apt to use "causes" as an entering wedge. Suffrage has been a godsend to many of them. Soup kitchens and working girls' homes are subjects of the keenest interest. Philanthropy runs riot so long as it brings in its train association with members of the upper ten. If a woman can contrive to get on a committee with the right people she is sure of a few luncheons or teas, even a dinner or so that serve to help in her social uplift. If she can capture as her own guest some prominent person connected with the good work, then she can even hope

to entertain at her own house with her guest as the drawing card.

We find members of the newly rich entertaining prison reformers, Polish musicians, Russian artists, and so on, not from any love of reform or music or art, but simply to make good with those who are interested in such things.

The sister of a well-known New York artist spends all her Summers at Magnolia with a family that have made themselves the laughing stock of the colony by their frenzied attempts to "get in." The girl is essentially a snob and treats the hostess with the last degree of contempt, all the while reaping the material advantages of her millions. The fact that the girl has good connections and a conspicuous brother is her warrant for such behavior, for she knows the tenets of the people she is dealing with and realizes that she can exact any price for the connection of her name with theirs.

III

It is almost pathetic to see the specimens the *noveaux riches* collect about themselves, just for the sake of appearing popular.

Apart from those we have just mentioned who have good connections, there is usually a bevy of poor relations and hangers-on, who are most obviously trying to make a good appearance and struggling to live up to the tone of the establishment with which they are connected.

With people of this sort about her, the wife of the new millionaire saunters into the Casino or into Polo. These form her body-guard when she reports at Hill Top or Berger's. With these she can appear at public places where it would be impossible for her to show herself alone. Better an escort of the rag-tag than none at all! But of course society cannot be fooled. It looks on and mocks, sometimes quite openly.

At a prominent tennis tournament at one of our Summer resorts two guests at the house of Mrs. William Goodwin got into the grounds of the club where the tournament was held without paying. One of the doorkeepers noticed the trick and followed up the culprits. Neither had the amount to pay for his admission and so both were escorted ignominiously out of the grounds. The two men showed no shame at all in the matter, but waited about the entrance until the worthy Mrs. Goodwin appeared and duly paid their entrance fees. The matter got into the papers much to that lady's chagrin.

There are always in the inner circle of society people who have no money at all, and these people exploit the newcomer more mercilessly than anyone else.

An excellent example of this is the case of Mrs. Emmerson Lewis, a woman of family and one who has *entré* into the best houses of Newport. The Lewis family lost their money gradually and were eventually forced to live by their wits. Mr. Lewis gambled, usually to advantage. Mrs. Lewis turned her attention to the various climbers with whom she was brought in contact. The same Mrs. Goodwin I have mentioned before proved a likely subject. Mrs. Lewis had a very lucrative two years of it. The two women could be seen driving down the avenue together any afternoon. There was a great deal of shopping to be done on the way always. Of course Mrs. Goodwin paid the bills, but wasn't it worth the expenditure of a good deal of money to be seen driving at the fashionable hour with one of the elect?

Then Mrs. Lewis advised a change of chefs at the Goodwin *ménage*. A man employed formerly by the Lewises in the days of their prosperity was sought out and engaged by the Goodwins. The salary paid was enormous, but Mrs. Lewis predicted the results would be found worth while.

"A good dinner and good wine will always draw people," she had pronounced with decision. The lady's commission from the chef easily ran up into the hundreds. It is rumored also she wrested from him a percentage of the commissions he received from the vari-

ous trades people which made a comfortable little income for her for two years.

At the end of that time the chef refused to hand over anything further, whereat Mrs. Lewis saw to it forthwith that he lost his place and incidentally his reputation as a desirable cook. Gardeners, housekeepers, chauffeurs, maids, all combine with people of the Lewis sort to rob the newcomer.

A very well known New York dealer in pictures joined forces with a society woman who was in dire need of ready money. The two brought about the sale of a two hundred thousand dollar painting which was afterwards proved to be but a copy of the original. If the poor dupe who bought the picture had brought suit against the dealer he would have jeopardized all of his future social chances, for he realized when it was too late the combination against him. So there was nothing for him to do but to submit gracefully.

The lady involved, however, considered the matter too good a joke to keep, so passed it on, and the whole colony enjoyed the worthy millionaire's chagrin at being "done." Her part in the deal was condoned, however, though I have heard that the dealer himself has since suffered from the transaction.

IV

I HAVE spoken so far only of the little devices used to trick the *parvenu*. There are far more contemptible things going on, things that involve real moral issues. A man has even been known to sacrifice his wife's morals on the altar of social ambition!

A few years ago at Bar Harbor a charming young matron, whose father had made his fortune in some sort of patent medicine, was deliberately thrown by her family in the way of a very notorious society man, whose penchant for women was the gossip of more than one continent. The affair that resulted created much scandal, but neither the father nor husband of the woman seemed to care, provided only the *liaison* helped to further their interests.

The society man saw the game, of course. He fostered the illusion that through the woman's connection with him her family would succeed in getting in. Before any real results were attained, however, the man tired of his charming mistress, and immediately the lady and her husband and father sank again into the insignificance from which they had arisen for the moment.

Pretty society women often play a good-looking man of the *parvenu*, knowing full well the man's wife, if she has social ambitions, will have to submit.

The son of a family well known in Bar Harbor for its spectacular scandals became bankrupt a few years ago. He was a disreputable fellow, drunk most of the time, but he undoubtedly had *entré* to the inner circle. A *mariage de convenance* was arranged between him and the eighteen-year-old daughter of a Western millionaire who had failed absolutely in his attempts to be recognized by the right people. The girl was just from boarding school and was quite unknowing of what she was getting into.

The night of the wedding the festivities were held by the sheriff who had much to say to the bridegroom. It cost the girl's father thousands of dollars to bring about the release of the bridegroom so that the wedding trip might be uninterrupted by legal proceedings. Then two weeks later in the Adirondacks the bridegroom was smitten with delirium tremens.

This is a typical example of the sacrifice that is constantly being made of the young girl of the newly rich to the *roué* of established social standing.

Then again, men who are struggling for recognition will occasionally bring themselves to the point of marrying some one of physicial defect who has good name and position to offer if not charm.

A fresh looking, genial youth, whose parents' money was the result of some cheap popular article of trade, married last summer at Narragansett the half-

witted daughter of an old Philadelphia family. It was a most pitiable affair. I saw the two afterwards at Polo; they were the subjects of much comment, of course. I think the poor wife took as much mortification from the situation as did the young husband. How much happiness both were sacrificing, for nothing but discontent and bitterness could result from such a *mesalliance!*

I could name a dozen families that come to Newport every summer in the vain hope of making good with society. These people have millions and could, if they were willing to settle down contentedly in their own sphere, get the best life could offer. But instead, they agonize year after year in their efforts to secure recognition in a set where happiness and contentment do not exist. They are snubbed, humiliated, scoffed at, but they keep on struggling and striving just the same.

There is pathos and tragedy in the situation, pathos in that the end is never attained, tragedy in the wasted energy of it all. But once the germ of social ambition "gets" a person the sense of true values is quite lost. All ideals and ideas, all morals, all that makes for a healthy normal existence are sacrificed on the altar of the Social God, with the result that the *parvenus* instead of infusing fresh blood and energy into our social system merely help along the decadence and unrest that are the present-day menace of civilization and progress.

What is to be done about it?

Nothing that I can see.

As long as society has that strange inexplicable lure that draws the outsider at every cost, the climber will continue to exist. He knows but one out of ten ever attains his goal, ever succeeds in "breaking in" successfully, and yet so potent is the charm and so insidious the fascination of the set he is aiming for that he is willing to play the game recklessly and at any bitter cost on the chance that he may be the lucky one.

Climbing is, after all, but a new manifestation of that gambling instinct that seems to be the keynote of all human nature. It is the taking a chance that makes life life. Without that instinct we would all be reduced to the condition of clods without a spark. The man with the dinner pail is taking his chance in digging a trench or at the corner saloon; the Stock Exchange man is taking his in the money mart; the Climber is taking his. It's the same spirit—the same human nature.

[*Editor's note: Another chapter in this series of articles dealing with "The Sins of the Four Hundred" will appear in the next number of* THE SMART SET. Back numbers are available.]

NO. 3 C

By Bertha Bolling

I WATCH from my corner, as it trips about,
'Neath soft frills and laces, now in and now out,
And laugh to myself, with a half sheepish glee,
As I look at my own solid No. 10 E,
And dream of a fireside, belonging to me,
With the brass kettle humming for afternoon tea;
And on the wide fender, your No. 3 C,
And by it, my clumsy old No. 10 E!

WATCHFUL WAITING

By Anna Steese Richardson

PORTER finished his third high-ball and rose resolutely to the task before him. Versed as he was in the art of shifting responsibility, he realized that no one could act as his proxy in this particular transaction.

Of course, the understanding between him and Flora had been extremely clear. He had held forth no false hopes of marriage in a dim future. But now her very complacence under existing conditions, and the fact that she had never demanded what Porter held to be both impractical and impossible, made him feel just a trifle uncomfortable. He was also annoyed by the knowledge that behind the dread of a scene with Flora lay an indefinable but pin-pricking regret.

With a frown, he summoned a hansom. At least this means of transportation was slower and more soothing than a taxicab. He left the doors open and leaned back, studying the pageant through half-closed eyes.

Fifth Avenue was bathed in the quivering, dancing sunlight of an early spring. Flower-trimmed hats had blossomed out over night. A world, turned young, especially the women of it, smiled at him and challenged him to drain the cup of life.

Well, that was just what he was about to do. During Easter week he would take unto himself a wife who had been counted the most delightful and successful débutante of the waning season, a flower-like, wide-eyed young person whose naïve pleasure and capacity for enjoyment had thrilled the social world which had been fed up on débutantes more worldly wise than their grandmothers.

The difference in their ages suggested no doubts to the mind of Richard Porter. A younger man would soon be bored with the simplicity and eagerness of Natalie Marsh. Age and varied experience had taught him the value of these charms.

He had just conjured a vision of his distinguished self waiting at the chancel of St. Agatha's for a virginal figure in white, when a traffic officer raised a hand, and Porter's hansom stopped abruptly before a certain shop whose name is nationally famous. He frowned and fixed his glance on an extremely ugly yellow and blue motor just ahead.

It was in this very shop that gradually but surely Flora had been transformed from the too daring type of a Casino chorus girl into the demure and less compromising figure which had shared most of his leisure hours for more years than he cared at this moment to count.

The hansom moved on with the flood of vehicles and he fell to musing on the night when he had met Flora at a rowdy supper given by some college boys. She had tried hard to appear sophisticated and had failed so completely that he had teased her about it.

Again traffic regulations brought the hansom up with a start in front of a conservative hotel where in recent years he and Flora had often lunched and dined. And again he recalled the night of their meeting, when it was obvious that, under her assumed gaiety, she was watching the selection of forks by those more experienced than herself in the use of flat silverware.

Yes, he remarked to himself smugly, he had done pretty well by Flora. He

had taken her out of the chorus. He had taught her how to dress, to carry herself in public, to talk, and to read current literature, so that she could hold her own when his men friends stopped at their table in a restaurant or shared their motor runs.

And Flora had proved a pliable creature. She knew jolly well he wouldn't stand for bad grammar, cheap slang, loud colors, nor perfumes, so she had placed herself under a woman who had had great success with the newly rich. Her little apartment now suggested the good taste and artistic spirit presumably sacred to the socially elect. For the daughter of a janitress who had ended her days decently and quietly in a home for incurables at Porter's expense, Flora had certainly done him proud.

It was too bad that at thirty she was beginning to look a bit heavy. He had often told her she was too fond of taxis, matinees and movies for the good of her figure. If only she had gone in for riding and tennis, like Natalie, she might have kept down her weight, but he supposed that sort of thing went with social privileges denied Flora.

Decidedly, after eleven years this was rather an uncomfortable moment. Whereupon he paid the driver the exact fare, without any tip, nodded mechanically to the hall boy, and crossed to the elevator.

As he let himself into the apartment noiselessly, he glanced across the small reception hall into the living-room, where Flora bent over her desk.

The bright spring sunshine threw into relief the well-groomed masses of her blue-black hair, the clear-cut profile of ivory white, with just a touch of healthy scarlet at the lips. At least, easy and good living had not marred the perfect profile! She was a smart-looking woman.

The little kidney-shaped desk of dull mahogany was littered with papers on which Flora had been figuring.

Porter, watching her, smiled.

All these years she had insisted on keeping a record of her expenses, which he as regularly had declined to audit, telling her that such things were all very well for married people, but it was a bad idea to mix household expenses with romance like theirs. Besides, he didn't care a hang what she did with the money, provided she enjoyed spending it as much as he enjoyed giving it to her.

Yes, they had got along uncommonly well. He realized this as his glance traveled around the room and rested on Flora's attractive figure. But now his father's death, his mother's loneliness in the huge old house on Tenth Street, certain demands which society naturally made on him as Richard Porter second, had forced him to realize—and Natalie Marsh was a comer, there was no doubt about that.

As he entered the living-room, Flora started to her feet with an exclamation. Some of the papers fluttered into the waste-basket and she bent quickly to rescue them, which relieved Porter of reaching a momentous decision.

Should he or should he not kiss her?

It did seem a bit of a Judas trick to kiss her in the old way when he was about to deal her a nasty blow. For, naturally, Flora would be badly cut up. Her wistful eyes had come between him and the eager joyousness of Natalie Marsh more than once.

He flung himself into his favorite chair as he told her how well she was looking.

Flora nodded, smiled, returned the compliment, and laid the scattered papers in a neat pile under a paper weight.

Then with a comradely "Well, what's new today?" she rested her arms on the back of her chair, cupped her chin in her well-kept hands, and looked at him with eyes that were disturbingly clear and frank.

"I thought I'd drop in for a little chat," he commenced tentatively, "about —about a matter we two ought to discuss."

"I hoped you would," she answered gravely.

"What do you mean?" he fenced.

"I was afraid you might write, and it would hurt me frightfully to feel that

after all these years you'd be afraid to tell me."

"How did you know?" he demanded, unable to keep the surprise out of his voice.

"My dear, I read the society pages, also *Town Topics*."

"But it hasn't been announced. I meant to tell you first."

"That's good of you," she answered with poise that sent Porter's memories harking back to an uncertain little figure at a supper table in Rector's eleven years before. "And, of course, Dickie, no two people can be as much to each other as we have been all these years without knowing each other fairly well. I didn't need the hints of a social tattler to tell me that I was going to lose you. You've been so horribly polite and considerate of me lately. I knew there was something on your mind. And, so far as I was concerned, that could only be one thing—another woman."

Porter swallowed audibly and then subsided.

This was not according to Hoyle.

All morning he had been working himself up to the point of breaking the news and staunching the flow of tears, and here was this calm, clear-eyed creature analyzing his incriminating conduct and withholding the expected tears.

He had a distinct sensation of being the injured party. It was quite some moments before he got round to the topic which was heaviest on his mind.

"Now, my dear girl, about the settlement. I've thought of it a good deal, and—I could make you an allowance, but something might happen to me, and you've been an awfully good sort. I'm no end fond of you."

A sparrow settled down on the window-ledge. Flora turned and fixed her unseeing gaze upon the little creature. It was just as well for the flow of Mr. Porter's remarks that at this moment he could not look into the sombre depths of her heavily shaded eyes. He went on with his carefully rehearsed speech.

"Er—I have some City of Paris bonds and a bit of Common Steel that are safe as government bonds. If you'd rather, I'll make it plain cash, but you might make a mistake in—er—in your investments and I wouldn't be here to pull you out. We're—er—I'm going to Japan, possibly to India—er—I'd like to feel safe about you."

Flora swung 'round in her chair and laid a hand that was almost caressing on the little pile of papers.

"It's just like you, Dickie boy, to think of everything for me, but you mustn't bother. You've always been generous with me and—and since Mama's death, I haven't had much reason for spending. So the other day when—er—when—er—I—er—saw what was coming," she hesitated just a few seconds, "I had a talk with Celestine. You know—where I get my hats. Her right name is Mary McCoy and she's the real thing. I've saved more than enough to buy in with her. She wants a place in 57th street and she needs more capital. I'll be a silent partner. It'll give me something to think about, some place to go, and the investment will pay enough to let me stop here."

Her glance traveled lovingly around the room. Porter recalled poignantly the very shops where they had chosen the fittings.

"Of course," he said abruptly, "I intended you should be in a position to keep this place. The income from those bonds—"

"Thank you," interrupted Flora with a suggestion of an edge on her voice, "but I prefer my income to come from the shop."

She rose and crossed restlessly to a table, burying her hot fingers in a bowl of flowers.

"Good Lord, Dickie, can't you understand that I couldn't divide you or anything belonging to you with—with her?"

Porter felt that things were going better. In a minute there'd be tears, nice, feminine, hysterical tears which would wash away his own sense of self-

abasement. Any man can find excuses for himself when a woman cries!

But again Flora failed him. And a few moments later he found himself on the street, crooking his finger at a taxi chauffeur while he decided sullenly that he had been greatly deceived in Flora. She had figured on such a finish of their pleasant intrigue and had fortified herself in a position where she could positively insult him.

II

THE Dickie Porters were not hitting it off very well. A great many people had noticed it. No one, however, realized the wideness of the breach between them except Natalie's maid and Perkins, who had been chosen to valet Porter by that gentleman's father.

The honeymoon had been all that Porter had pictured it, likewise their first season in New York.

Natalie's fresh beauty, rendered more provocative by a wifely aloofness which was merely skin-deep, roused envy in the hearts of younger men.

The subsequent summer spent at Newport had been less satisfactory. He knew his Newport. Other summers he had reacted from its conventional gaieties on motor trips to out of the way inns with Flora for company, uninterrupted sails, early morning games at golf.

But Natalie flung herself into the hectic, dance-mad season at Newport, and either Porter had to share it with her, or fling her at the heads of younger men waiting only too obviously to receive her.

During the second winter, his mother had a stroke and talked to him through twisted lips about perpetuating the name of Richard Porter. This brought him up with a jerk to the realization that one of his objects in marrying had been to gratify his mother's yearning to see a Richard Porter, 3rd. But Natalie vowed she would have no children until she had enjoyed her fling at life.

More months flew for Natalie and dragged drearily for Porter. The dancing craze had given way to skating and Porter had bruised his body and crucified his spirit in his determination to keep pace with his young wife. He had skated as a boy, of course, but at forty-five, even when you're in good condition, it's a bore.

Moreover for the first time in his life Porter found himself obliged by the war to take an active hand in the various enterprises on which the fortune of the Porter family was founded.

To his amazement he was soon fascinated and absorbed by the game of big business which hitherto he had viewed from a safe distance. He was tremendously proud, too, when men who had been merely making money for him began to defer to him.

Things came up constantly that he wanted to discuss when he reached home at night, but Natalie's interest in the war was limited to benefits for war-sufferers in which she posed and danced after a manner which Porter disapproved. It was after one of these pageants in which Natalie had appeared as a Nautch girl, so realistic in costuming that even a sophisticated audience had gasped, that matters came to a head.

"When we've reached the point that our wives outdo the Carmens and Salomes of opera, I think it's about time we end the farce we call charity."

"Meaning my costume last night?" demanded Natalie, as she stood with her elbow on the mantel, one slim hand on her hip and another holding a cigarette to her lips in the most approved art poster fashion.

"Yes, I, for one, propose that my wife shall keep out of these affairs in the future."

Natalie dropped into a chair and leaned forward, her shoulders hunched, her face elfin.

"You mean that you are actually forbidding me to do what all my friends wish they could do?"

"I ask you to have some respect for the name you bear."

Natalie gave a scornful laugh.

"I like that, Dick! A lot you cared about the family name when you were sowing your wild oats. But now that you have exhausted every sensation of life, you refuse to let me enjoy a few little—er—modern experiences. Well, I'm telling you flat that I won't stand for your silly dictation. I'm young and you're old—"

"I'm in the prime of life, Natalie," Porter responded hotly. "But that's no reason for spending my days and nights chasing excitement. Why, I never felt more fit in my life."

"Physically, yes. You still look fit, but in sheer joy of living you're burned out, and I'm not. I want a young man in my life. Good heavens, Dick, any man can make money for a woman. I want a man to play about with me, thrill with me, drink from one cup and fling it aside, and love me as if I were the first woman, not the last, in his life."

"Good God!" mumbled Porter, reaching out figuratively for support in a world that spun around him.

And long after Natalie had left the room he sat in the same position, muttering at intervals "Good God!"

Only forty-five, doing a man's work in his world for the first time in his life, making himself felt in a critical hour, possessed of a figure that required no aid from the tailor who had fitted it for years, all this, and yet accused of having lost zest in loving and living because he wouldn't dance attendance day and night upon a whimsical, pleasure-drunk girl. . . .

III

GREATLY cheered by his first highball for the day, Porter stood at the window of his club staring at the pageant of highly polished machines, smartly dressed women, and flowers on the Avenue.

The spirit of spring smiled at him and he smiled back.

He hurried to a telephone booth.

The familiar number slipped from his lips as if he had called it two hours ago instead of two years.

"Hello, Flora, too busy to see me this morning?"

"Never too busy to see you, Dickie. I was just going over to the shop, but I'll telephone instead."

IV

"BY Jove, Flora," he exclaimed as he held her at arm's length and studied her with appraising glance, "you look better than ever. Not so heavy by ten pounds, are you, girlie?"

"That's the result of going into business. I've had to keep myself fit. I've been riding a lot mornings."

But she was careful not to raise the shades or sit where the relentless spring light could strike her face.

The perfect profile was unchanged but she did not want him to see the fine lines around her eyes, nor the rouge on her lips. They would have vanished before he came again. Happiness! She was tense with it.

Porter swept the room with his glance. Nothing changed! Her favorite photograph of him in the same old frame on her desk, and just above it the photographs she had always liked best, Porter in sporting clothes with his horse, his caddy and his car.

"Think you could get ready for a run to Aiken by Friday?" he asked an hour later.

"Tomorrow, if necessary," she said in a voice that was full of singing notes.

Porter studied her approvingly. "You always were that sort, dear—ready to flit at a minute's notice. I've been through a lot the last few months, I've earned a change and some good golfing.

* * * * *

Celestine, otherwise Mary McCoy, sat down suddenly and blinked her eyes rapidly.

"My Gawd, honey, and the season at its height, too! But, of course, I'll have to spare you, though there are two or three customers that'll rage something fierce if you don't fit them to

their summer hats. So he's come back."

Then with her business instinct to the fore, she exclaimed, "Oh, come on, make it Atlantic City for the week-end."

"No," said Flora quietly, "he hates Atlantic City."

"But you love it, and Aiken'll be about as gay as a graveyard for you, honey. Of course it's nothing to me—"

Flora drew a deep, quivering sigh. "But it's a lot to me, Mary. I trained myself to like the things he did, the places he wanted to go. She was all for her own way in everything. That's why she lost him."

Mary McCoy, alias Celestine, gasped. "You—you mean they're getting a divorce?"

"Just that! In Rhode Island! Why, Mary, she never had a look in! It was a habit with him, long before she came on the scene, and she isn't the kind to be a habit with any man. I knew it was just a matter of watchful waiting for me. But I didn't just wait. I thought out all the things she did that I couldn't do, but he liked. It won't be so stupid at Aiken this time. He won't go off riding with the men, because I can ride now, and unless that professor up at Van Cortlandt is a liar, I'll beat him at golf, too."

"Flora, honey, you're a wonder."

"No, I'm not." Flora answered. "But I've had more than two years of loneliness that was just plain hell. And the only thing that kept me from going mad was studying out how I could hold him tight when he came back!"

CHIVALRY

By Henry Hugh Hunt

HAVING spent the afternoon at his club, experimenting with Bronx cocktails and Rye high-balls, Reggie decided to carry the result into the open air.

As he made his way, with some precision, along the Avenue, he suddenly became aware of a blonde bit of femininity whose scarlet lips smiled at him alluringly. Reggie smiled ardently in return; but his amorous instincts were immediately submerged in a feeling of intense sympathy when he discovered that the little thing had nothing on but her nightie!

It was darned pathetic, considering the weather, and everything! And, besides, he had often dreamed of being caught in the same predicament himself.

Without a moment's hesitation, Reggie spread open his fur-lined overcoat, and bent swiftly forward in a gallant act of protection.

As his nose came into violent contact with Bonwit-Teller's plate-glass window, the heartless little thing in the nightie continued to smile a waxen smile.

Reggie's eyes were blinded with tears as he wavered away.

"Who'd think the lil dear'd have sush a heluva punch," he observed plaintively.

ARTISTS

By Van Vechten Hostetter

MICHAEL DUGAN was born in "the neck," but he was never a "necker." His father and mother were, and his grandparents on both sides had been; but in Michael Dugan there was a different spirit.

"The neck" was a low section of Philadelphia, squatting between the merging Schuylkiil and Delaware rivers. Its principal industries were pig-raising, truck-gardening, voting, fighting and scaring reformers out of their wits when they came down to make photographs of "conditions."

In all of these pursuits Michael's father was engaged. At fighting he was particularly successful, and when the neighbors tired of entertaining him his good wife saved him from boredom. They were a well-mated couple.

In due time after Michael was born the neighbor women came in, as they always did on such occasions, and subjected him to a thorough if not scientific inspection. He was pinched and thumped and pulled and hauled and gouged in the ribs and chucked under the chin by rude thumbs until he would have given up the ghost had he been any but a "necker's" baby. As it was, he underwent the ordeal with a stoic indifference that nonplussed the women, thereby prolonging their operations.

He was the first baby they had ever seen that did not come into the world boiling with rage, yelling at the top of its voice, kicking violently and punching out with its fists at everybody that came near it. Michael took the whole thing as a matter of course, troubling himself only to open his eyes occasionally; then closing them again, languidly, as if he had hardly expected to discover anything new or interesting. Such an attitude might be due to sickness, but the women—mothers and grandmothers and great-grandmothers—agreed that Michael was as sound as a stone; and it might mean the child was an idiot, but it hadn't an idiot's eyes.

So the women drank what liquor remained and went away, smacking their lips and shaking their heads and muttering. The child was not right; they were thankful he was none of theirs; there would be trouble about him.

At supper-time five days later Michael's father, who had not showed up in the meantime, came up from McGovern's in an ugly mood that was not much improved by the discovery that he had a son whose arrival had to be proclaimed by his mother.

He was more annoyed and humiliated than worried.

He berated Michael's mother and all her ancestors and declared the child was a disgrace to him and the ward and the party. He would be ashamed to take a present from the boss for a boy like that. When his language seemed to lack the vigor the situation demanded he seized a chair and broke it in his two hands.

Michael's mother, who was already somewhat disturbed by the child's lack of spirit, did not relish her husband's performance. She did not, however, pay much attention until Dugan, Senior, undertook to swear that Dugan, Junior, was no boy of his. This could not be permitted to go unchallenged. She hurled herself at him, bearing him to the floor with a crash that set the windows rattling. Mrs. Dugan was astride her husband and pommeling his helpless face with huge, compe-

tent fists that alternated methodically when from Michael's crib arose and swelled such a cry as never before was heard from even a "necker's" baby.

It was a glorious, challenging cry that redeemed all of Michael's perverse taciturnity and thrilled his parents with pride beyond expression.

Mrs. Dugan, sacrificing her strategic advantage, rushed across the room to answer the call, arriving barely in time to rescue her son, who, with the resource and indomitable will of a Dugan, had somehow rolled to a hopeless position on the edge of his crib, from which he was about to tumble to disaster.

Dugan, stumbling lamely to his feet, followed her, cursing joyfully. As Michael warmed to his task their rejoicing increased that their baby, after all, was one to be proud of.

II

MICHAEL, growing into childhood, had all the appearance of a typical "necker" boy. He learned to curse and quarrel and fight and had the advantages of the most competent and thorough instruction "the neck" afforded. He looked after the pigs and the garden and performed obediently—though with secret detestation—all the other tasks his father laid out for him. Generally, he did his full part in sustaining the traditions of the section.

When he grew older he thrashed the neighbor boys and was thrashed by them. He trooped with them "uptown" in ugly gangs of fifteen or twenty some Saturday nights to carouse and batter strange faces, and then trooped back. He took his shotgun when called and went with the others to "the neck's" border, there to stand in sullen and threatening defiance, barring the way, until the reformers—discreet ladies and gentlemen—who had thought to make photographs of the unsanitary piggeries for campaign materials, turned back. The neighbor women forgot they had said there was something wrong with Michael Dugan. Only his father and mother remembered his unseemly conduct on the day of his birth and they attached no importance to it.

But Michael Dugan himself was never at rest.

He was tortured constantly by a desire to get away from "the neck" and all its pigs and people. They irritated him. He did not know why and he never tried to discover. He was not conscious of superiority; he did not yearn for better associations, nor even for different ones. His spirit was not struggling to be free of its narrow prison nor groping bravely in the night as do the restless spirits of young men who subsequently go to Pittsburgh and work their way up in the steel business.

He was simply discontented.

He did not want to go anywhere; he merely wanted to go away. There were times when he thought seriously of stealing a pig or two from his father to get money and climbing on a train and riding and riding until he could pay to ride no farther.

Yet he did nothing of the sort. It would be simple enough, but it was even simpler to go on living as he had always lived.

III

ONE night Michael Dugan and a dozen youthful "neckers" were tramping homeward through the heart of the city, cursing blatantly and hurling insulting epithets at pedestrians they passed, as was their habit. They had spent four rather dull hours in Chinatown, eating and drinking their fill and finding no one that dared ask for pay.

"Look there!" cried one. "Look at Mike in there! Oh, ain't he sweet!"

The gang stopped and stared insolently through the brilliant window of a fashionable bar-room.

There, white-coated and white-aproned, beneath white and varicolored lights, was the refined but faithful living image of Michael Dugan. With the effortless dexterity of a master he was pouring sparkling liquors from half a dozen odd-shaped bottles into crystal

glasses and stirring and mixing them with silver spoons.

At the bar before him were three or four young gentlemen in evening dress, with silk hats tilted back, watching him admiringly and exchanging pleasantries with him. He laughed and chatted; his white practiced hands required no direction; they even tossed glasses tumbling and flashing in the air and caught them deftly while his eyes never turned from his patrons.

Between this polished, competent and smiling gentleman and Michael Dugan from "the neck" was all the difference in the world and yet in features they were like enough to be twin brothers. They were heavy-shouldered, square-chested fellows. They had the same big eyes of the same blue, set far apart and looking out evenly from beneath heavy black brows, though Dugan's brows were rough and bushy and those of the man in the bar were smooth and well trained. Their big straight noses with swelling nostrils were from the same mold. Their large, straight-lined mouths and their square, almost belligerent jaws were the same. The bartender's hair was close cropped, parted in the middle and plastered down until it shone, but it was the color of Michael Dugan's which had not been cut nor combed nor washed in weeks.

Some of the rowdies hooted and yowled their contempt for their fellow's counterpart; others cried in derisive falsetto, "Oh, what a darling!" "Come to Mama!" "There's a kiss for Papa's boy!"

But Michael Dugan was darkly silent. He was overwhelmed with shame and envy, sick and disgusted with himself and his companions. He looked at his rough, clumsy hands and rubbed them over his beard of a week's growth. He looked down at his cheap, ill-fitting, frayed and filthy clothes. He cursed himself under his breath while the gang, forgetful of him, kept up their railery.

"Come on!" yelled Tim Monahan, striding toward the door. "Come on! Let's have a little glass of milk with little Willie!"

In they swaggered, glowering, arms swinging with half-doubled fists, ready for trouble, willing to do more than their part to make it.

Tim Monahan, the others at his heels, pushed his way in among the silk-hatted young men, shoving them contemptuously aside, and leaned heavily against the bar. One of the young men slapped him in the face, stinging him to frenzy.

"Damn you!" he yelled, whirling and hurling himself on the insulter, bearing him to the floor.

The lights flashed out.

Michael Dugan stood back and in the half light that came in from the street watched the gentlemen and his fellow "neckers" struggling, saw them strike and tear and kick and scratch, heard them grunt and groan and curse.

Then he went out.

Before the police came the "neckers" ran. When they had gone far enough to be safe they stopped and found that Michael Dugan was not among them.

They never saw him again.

IV

Michael Dugan walked in a Broadway bar-room of the less pretentious sort and asked to see the boss. His hopes were not high. He was clean shaven and his outlaw hair was plastered down with vaseline; but he had lacked money to buy clothes and his ill-shapen and shabby suit quickened his consciousness of his meanness. A sharp word would have sent him slinking out of the place like a mongrel dog.

Broken spirits, however, are not so quickly advertised by a body that twenty years in "the neck" have tempered; the boss saw only a young giant that had ten hours a day of heavy work in him and was green enough to sell it all for a cheap price.

The boss knew very well what he wanted when he saw it, if he did have to remain at some distance to inspect Dugan without breaking his neck.

The boss' mind was made up before he asked:

"Well, what do you want?"

"I want a job," said Michael Dugan.

"What kind of a job?"

"Any kind."

"Come around in the morning at seven o'clock and go to work," said the boss.

Michael Dugan went around at seven o'clock in the morning and went to work. It was the hardest and the unpleasantest work he had ever done, but it afforded him the opportunity he desired and he was satisfied. Being ordered about by a pudgy and soft little saloonkeeper, half a dozen bartenders and two or three porters, to say nothing of countless patrons any three of whom he could thrash, was not much to his liking; men of sure purpose and ambition, however, are capable of great sacrifice and Michael Dugan was entirely willing to invest his pride and his hatred of authority to gain a position wherein he might be as proud as he pleased and himself exercise authority without mercy.

He was confident that he would not always, nor very long, be moving boxes and barrels upstairs and down and scrubbing floors and wiping up filthy slime from under the bartenders' feet.

He would be a bartender, and he would be a head bartender, but not in this place, at least not for long.

Sometimes he smiled—his own smile, which was more a sneer—when he stooped to some mean task and nobody could see his face. It was amusing in a way that these fellows, commanding him so officiously, should think he would stay down. They would be begging jobs of him yet and they didn't know it, the fools. Well, they should have the jobs if they deserved them. He bore them no ill will. They were in position to boss him and he would have thought very little of them had they not done so.

Still he was amused by their stupidity; they were unable to see any difference between him and the fellow Fritz that washed dishes and helped the lunch bar man, and there was all the difference in the world between him and Fritz. Perhaps they knew that when he accepted his job he was afraid to ask what his pay would be and because of that put him down for a born menial who would always be glad to labor from morning until night for eight dollars a week, or even for less. Well, let them. His father had thought he would always look after the pigs.

The puffy little boss was not so stupid. He observed that "Mike," while never neglecting his own work, found time to be interested in other people's. Mike, or "boy," as they called him, could wash and polish glasses and at the same time listen to patrons' orders and mark how they were filled. The boss knew it; he was sorry he would some day have to lose a very satisfactory "boy." Still he was glad he had a satisfactory bartender in reserve.

In the course of time Mike outgrew his job, just as he had known he would. He took his place with the others behind the bar, the boss making room for him by dispensing with the services of a young man who had accumulated so many diamonds and sweethearts that he was beginning to abuse his job.

Dugan had no desire for sweethearts and was willing to wait a long time for his diamonds; he drank milk and when he was through work he went to bed or read; opportunity found him prepared to seize it. No one would have guessed he had been a "boy" so recently. He knew the names and faces and drinks of more customers than any other man behind the bar. He knew what patrons liked a cordial greeting and what preferred none. He knew who relished the gossip of the street, who enjoyed a bit of scandal, who roared at an off-color yarn, who liked to hear what was not in the papers about the diamond and the turf and the ring.

Some men go away unsatisfied if they have not exchanged a few pleasantries with the bartender; others are irritated by as little as a "Good morning"; Dugan always knew which was which. He knew, too, that the coldest, shrewdest man of affairs, accustomed to searching behind every act for hidden motives,

was flattered when as he approached the bar his favorite whiskey, selected from among forty brands, was pushed forward to meet him.

In six months Dugan was the acknowledged favorite of the clientele. The boss was wondering why it had taken him so long to discover the "boy's" real value. The number of patrons that walked the length of the bar to be served by Dugan when his fellows were idle steadily increased. If others were ahead of them they did not mind; Dugan's good nature and his wit made the waiting worth while. His end of the bar became a sort of a mecca for the "good fellows," the men with plenty of money to spend.

There had been a time when there were few enough of them among the patrons here and the boss had wanted them sorely, for they yielded a profit per capita beyond comparison with that provided by any other class of men. They were the fellows whose doings, actual and imaginary, were chronicled week after week in the amusement sections of the Sunday newspapers—young men who lived on their fathers' bounty, brokers, bond salesmen, automobile agents, wine salesmen, commercial eccentrics, promoters of strange enterprises, pseudo noblemen and soldiers and other adventurers—all "clever" men. There was nothing substantial nor permanent about most of them. They flashed and dazzled a while and then vanished, but there were always new stars to take their places. A few, like "Ruby Dan" Graves, the race-track gambler; "Major" James Balding, who once saved the life of the Prince of Wales and wore the famous clothes with the fifty-seven pockets; and "Doctor" Franz von Fitzhugh, "pretender to the Prussian throne," had stayed on year after year.

Sprightly conversation, good manners of a kind and good dress were the principal assets of these gentlemen; Michael Dugan made them his. The association spurred and encouraged his ambition, sharpened his naturally keen wits. His popularity increased with his growing admiration for his patrons and his redoubling efforts to merit their good will. He came to think as they thought, to talk as they talked, to practice their graces that pleased him most, even to dress as they dressed. When he was on the street, attired in modest elegance, strolling in leisurely fashion, satisfied and confident looking, no one would ever have taken him for a bartender.

Yet with all his study of the art of personality Dugan did not neglect his own trade; on the contrary, he came to regard it with something like the religious devotion of an artist. To know what his fellows knew and all that was told in books was not enough. He was constantly experimenting, creating new drinks and trying to improve old ones, often with success that won him sincere commendation. His Ultra-Violet Bronx and his Queens Cocktail came to be known in every cafe on Broadway, where the most heroic, patient and painstaking efforts were made to produce them in their imperial quality, though Dugan's admirers always shook their heads with wry faces and vowed the results were abominable. They didn't care if the proprietor of the Café Bazin, being the brother-in-law of Dugan's boss, was in a position to know all of Dugan's secrets; nor if the manager of the Olympian Buffet, seeking knowledge at whatever risk, had stood before Dugan and sipped, gulped and gurgled his rare creations until he collapsed and had to be carried like a beef to a Turkish bath. No, they said, there was only one Dugan—only one Ultra-Violet—only one Queens.

One day in the Spring—it was ten o'clock or even earlier—Burney Burnham, who, after some fifteen years as a twenty-five-dollar-a-week tragedian of the legitimate stage had burst forth as a twenty-five-dollar-an-hour film comedian, hung against the bar and chatted with Dugan as he sipped his favorite gin. It was a dry gin, whose cheapness had recommended it in the old days when he was a strolling player, and Burney clung to it for reasons of sentiment.

From present symptoms Dugan observed mentally that Burney was within an hour or so of the reminiscent stage, in which he would knit his bushy brows painfully, run his fingers through the iron gray locks that he had refused to sacrifice to the new art, and read Hamlet wretchedly, his spare frame shaking until the building trembled and the glasses tinkled on the back-bar.

Dugan, despite his liking for Burney Burnham, regarded Hamlet as a thorough-going nuisance; therefore, he was overjoyed when the globose "Ruby Dan" Graves waddled upon the scene. Dan's little patent leather Oxfords squeaked and twinkled and he was puffing and blowing as usual, his face as red from his Bangkok hat to his three-layer chin as the famous gem that glowed above his white grosgrain waistcoat. His pudgy hand, soft and pink as a baby's, clutched the remains of a copy of *The Morning Telegraph*.

There was something business-like in Dan's bright smile this morning that indicated he had not come for idle gossip.

After the customary greetings he stood in thoughtful silence, recovering his breath, while Dugan made him a Queens, which he dispatched with a gulp.

"Listen," said Dan; "I want you to spread the warning."

"Warning?" said Burnham stagily. "Warning? What warning is that? What foul plot is now a-foot?"

"A foul plot to sandbag everybody that plays hunches and loves Ultra-Violets—and their name is legion," said Dan, waving an arm grandiloquently. "They've put an old, wind-broken, spavined relic in the last race at Havre de Grace and named him Ultra-Violet. Of course everybody with a superstitious streak that knows anything about *the* Ultra-Violet will make a play on that dog, and he's the only one in the lot—God pity 'em all!—that hasn't got the ghost of a show."

"Maybe he's improved; you know they will do that," suggested Dugan. He was an optimist in the first place and he had pride and egotism enough to defend anything related even remotely to himself.

"Improved!" exclaimed Dan scornfully. "Improved! The only way they could improve that antique would be to shoot him. Why, if he had been a man he could have voted for Lincoln, and he never won a race even when he was in his prime. If he had ever thought there was a chance for him he would have turned around and run the other way. Now he's so old I think they've got him on a liquid diet. I tell you they ought to be prosecuted by the cruelty society."

"Well, I won't put anything on him," said Dugan; "I seldom play the races, anyway—but I certainly hope he wins."

"What was his first name?" asked Burney Burnham.

"You'll have to ask an older man than I am," said Dan. "My knowledge only goes back to the time when the Bronx Cocktail was invented. They had been changing his name every season and they had run out of names when the Bronx came out. They called him Bronx and all the hunch players got on him the first time he started. Of course he was a red-hot favorite and he ran true to form. A horse named Slow But Sure won that race. Some of the also rans got so indignant when the old Bronx's name was mentioned along with theirs that they broke out of the stables and never were heard of again."

Burney Burnham set down his glass and wrinkled his brows in the manner of a motion picture lawyer mastering an impossible problem.

"I can come to no other conclusion," he said at last, somewhat thickly, "than that you are against this horse."

"That's no exaggeration," said Dan drily.

"Well, then," said Burney, "I won't bet anything on him, but I can't help saying I feel some sympathy for the old fellow after you have talked the way you have behind his back. I wouldn't treat a dog that way." He pondered a minute. "My feeling is not strong enough to warrant my providing any financial backing for the party, but I

have a modicum of respect for his gory fetlocks"—

"Hoary, you mean, I guess," interrupted Dan helpfully.

"Yes, hoary, I should say, and enough fetlock feeling for a veteran to give him my moral support. Still," said Burney, fumbling forth notebook and pencil, "I guess I better make a note of the name so I'll remember whom not to bet on."

"Do so by all means," cautioned Dan emphatically. "I'm going down to the track, so I leave it to you and Dugan to warn all my friends." And off he squeaked.

The rest of the morning and through the afternoon Dugan conscientiously passed out the word, distasteful as the task was, for there was a warm spot in his heart for the ancient namesake of his beloved Ultra-Violet.

Burney Burnham, exhausting the supply of his favorite gin, summoned a taxicab and set out in search of more. Some time in the afternoon he awoke in his cab with dry lips, an aching head still dizzy, and a hazy recollection of having received some important information about a horse race from Dan Graves.

With a determined effort he assembled a few of his wits and recalled that with commendable foresight he had put the precious bit in writing, leastmost enough of it to refresh his memory.

Burney breathed a redolent instruction to the driver to make with all speed for the nearest poolroom and with heroic resolution set himself to the not simple task of searching his pockets for the precious memorandum. Even with ideal conditions Burnham had found it extremely difficult to hunt down mispocketed articles; keeping account of what territory had been explored was a severe test of the mental powers.

Hours later—it was near midnight—Burnham drove around to see Dugan. There should be fresh gin on hand now.

Dan Graves with a rather forlorn smile was buying champagne for all comers, of whom there was not much of a shortage.

"Come on, Burney," he cried. "I'm squaring myself for passing out bum info."

"What?" said Burnham. "Didn't he win?"

"*Didn't* he win?" cried Dan. "Good Lord! Did you play him?"

"Why, yes," said Burnham, "I made a trifling investment. What did he do?"

"He fell dead," gasped Dan, leaning weakly against the bar, "right after he won the race. I guess it was surprise and disappointment that killed him. He paid a little over nineteen to one."

"I think I will do the rest of the buying for the evening," remarked Burnham. "I also feel as if I ought to pay the funeral expenses." He paused. "Something seems to tell me, too, that I would be doing less than my duty if I didn't erect a suitable monument to my late friend and co-worker. I will still have a dollar or two left with which to establish the Ultra-Violet Buffet. A life-like portrait of the immortal animal that made it possible shall grace the front windows and the illustrious gentleman whose art"—Burney waved an arm grandly to Dugan—"was the inspiration of—of—inspiration of—the whole business shall run it. Dan, I had four thousand on your little four-footed friend."

V

Michael Dugan, manager of the Ultra-Violet Buffet, needed no porter. He needed no man. He needed no boy. But he did need the wretched thing that stood before him, trembling and twisting its hands, staring at the floor and begging half inarticulately for a job—a place to sleep, something to eat, it didn't matter what, and something to drink, and that didn't matter. Here was a being in which the last spark of manhood had died, more shameless than a beggar accepting alms from a wanton, more cowardly than the meanest cur that ever ran yelping in terror when a boy stooped as if to pick up a clod. He was filthy and in rags; even the charitable, sickening, would turn away from him.

Dugan took him into the cellar, put him under a shower, gave him clean clothing.

"You can stay here and work—as long as you behave yourself," he said with no compassion.

The fellow dared not lift his eyes. He mumbled something that Dugan, as he turned away and started up the stairs, supposed was thanks.

Michael Dugan could not have explained why he had done what he had. The reason was that he needed some one to abuse, some one that would bear abuse. As his popularity had grown he had been shrewd enough and strong enough to control his growing egotism; had his rise continued to be gradual he might always have been so; but the sudden leap to success and fame of a sort that was very real to him and power had made him drunk.

The very manner of the origin of the Ultra-Violet Buffet was "story" that all the papers seized and it had been but the first of scores. All New York and everyone that New York newspapers could reach had learned all about the carved rosewood bar with its silver rails, the marble mosaic floor, the rich tapestries and the delicate frescoes by Marcin that graced the walls, the Tiffany glass that flashed and glowed and sparkled like piles of diamonds before the great back-bar mirrors, and the wonderful, almost living painting of youths and maidens dancing that filled the wall from back-bar to ceiling.

And all had read of Michael Dugan, the master, who had made the tending of a bar first a profession and then an art, who had made the fusing and blending of liquors a science.

Turned as his head was, Dugan had without effort retained the admiration of his old friends before the bar and added thousands to their number; something in his nature kept him from displaying to them the arrogant attitude that was making his employes hate him. Down in his soul he knew that these men that flocked to the Ultra-Violet because he was there were really his superiors and were patronizing him. He never consciously admitted this to himself; but he lived the admission in his manner toward them from day to day and month to month; otherwise his vogue would have waned.

But Dugan had developed an assertive consciousness of superiority to his men that was offensive and irritating to all and intolerable to some. He had regarded himself as somehow made of different stuff than they. They were good men of their sort—he had got the best he could and had not haggled over wages—but, after all, they were only bartenders and they could never be anything else; they could never be artists.

Their ideals were low, he had told himself; their tastes were low; they lacked conception and appreciation of the finer things of life; they saw in their patrons only men with money enough to buy expensive drinks and grant liberal tips, they did not know and could not know and would not have cared if they had known that they were gentlemen of character and of quality. The Tiffany glassware was no more to them than the cheap stuff of a workingman's saloon. The costly furnishings of the Ultra-Violet were nothing to them; they forgot the name of Marcin almost as soon as they heard it. The picture of youths and maidens dancing was called the most nobly conceived and brilliantly executed as well as the most beautiful work of its kind outside of the Metropolitan Museum.

Burney Burnham had run across it by accident in the shop of an obscure dealer and had got it for a shameful price. Connoisseurs had declared it was worth more than the buffet. It was the work of Beauregard, who had had a brief hour of fame some ten years before. His pictures had shown flashes of genius, but never more and he had been forgotten. Burney Burnham had found what even Beauregard had not known was a masterpiece.

Dugan regarded himself as a Beauregard; he appreciated and was inspired by this work that stretched above his head. It meant something to him; it meant ideals; to these gross fellows it

was no more than a circus lithograph. Dugan was a powerful fellow and no man had dared to fight with him, but many had left his service, giving him oath for oath and declaring that they were men and would not be served as dogs.

Dugan was subconscious of the fact that his overbearing manner was keeping his establishment disorganized, yet he lacked the power to restrain the egotism that had once gained freedom.

So, not knowing why, and never seeking to know, he took this miserable and debased and groveling thing from the street that he might have something to abuse.

A dog he was and "Dog" Dugan named him. He did not resent it. He resented nothing. He polished Dugan's shoes while Dugan cursed him for the awkwardness of his unnerved hands. Dugan took an inhuman delight in finding disgusting tasks for him and standing over him to sneer while he performed them. Dugan's men became satisfied with their places. They did not mind his merciless persecution of Dog, but rather enjoyed it. They wondered, as Dugan had for a while, if he should ever be able to say or do anything that would rouse the creature to human resentment. Dugan knew there was no resentment in him.

One night Michael Dugan sat at his rosewood desk just inside the front end of the bar.

It was Sunday and Dugan, according to his habit, was going over his accounts. There was really no other time, for he must be always entertaining when the buffet was open.

Presently there came over the manager a consciousness that he was not alone.

He swung around in his chair and there saw Dog, who had disobeyed the order to keep to the cellar except when called.

His hands were twisting nervously as usual and the corners of his mouth were twitching.

He was leaning back against the bar and staring stupidly, almost but not just like an idiot, up at the picture of the dancing youths and maidens.

Michael Dugan burned with rage. This rotten, soulless beast, without even the self-respect of a beast, had dared to disobey him. That was enough to madden him, but he stood and stared at this masterpiece as if he had a heart that was capable of inspiration.

Dugan jumped from his chair and strode half way down the bar to where Dog stood.

He towered above the waif and looked down at him, black with anger.

"You cur," he growled, "what do you mean by daring to come up here. Get down into your hole! Down, down, you hound!"

Dog did not appear to hear, but still gazed at the picture.

Dugan struck him full in the face with his open hand. It came away bloody, as Dog, unresisting, half stumbled and half fell to the floor. He lay still and Dugan looked at him and sneered.

"A pretty thing you are," he said, "to stand and look at what was made for only men to see! For men, I say! D'you hear me! By God, if I catch you at that again I'll break your rotten head, you whelp! You're not fit to see a thing like that! Crawl down—"

With a shriek like a crazed animal's that chilled the blood in Dugan's arteries the thing he had tortured sprang at his face.

Dugan, frightened for the first time in his life, fell back, putting up his hands.

Dog seized a paring knife and leaped upon the back-bar, glasses crashing and splintering over the floor.

"Stop! Stop! You fiend!" yelled Dugan and rushed to grip his victim's legs as the knife flashed and flashed again, ripping and tearing through the canvas. Dog clung to the mirror posts and kicked Dugan away.

"Good God! He's crazy!" cried Dugan, white with fear and ran to his desk for his pistol.

Dog heard and turned and hurled the knife at him. It found its mark. Dog

leaped down and ran and pounced upon his torturer, bending down and whispering hot in his ear, "Beauregard! *I'm Beauregard.*"

His men found Dugan in the morning.

The police looked a long time for Dog, but never found him.

FASHIONABLE FICTION

By J. Kenyon Nicholson

PHRYNETTE, *en deshabille,* lounged idly in the spacious *fauteuil* in her *boudoir* peevishly petting her *bête noir.* On its perch close by chirped a beautiful *rara avis* with *sang froid.* Although it was raining outside, Phrynette was in *beaux esprits,* for had she not that very morning received a *billet d'amour* from her very best *bon amie?*

I ask you. And her great lover was coming.

A *femme de charge* answered the bell. A minute later he stood before her, *e pluribus unum.*

Phrynette was so happy that she broke into a *petite chanson.*

Her lover, *semper fidelis,* began to speak.

"Salve! It is I, Waldo, *dein liebchen!"*

Their arms melted in an embrace *à la mode.*

Tout a-l'heure he straightened his *pince-nez.*

"I love you *ad absurdum,"* he gasped with *savoir faire.*

"Enough to elope?" she asked *con passione.*

"Nay, I fear your *vox populi."*

"Shucks! He is *persona non grata* around here."

But Waldo would not be persuaded.

Nervously he paced the floor *pro et con.*

Sadly he heard the merry clink of glasses in the *Weinstube* across the way. Waldo realized in his soul of souls that this was the end of a perfect day.

"Vale," he breathed *ex animo.*

"Carramba!" she ventured *pianissimo.*

"O tempora! O mores!" he sobbed *sub rosa.*

Taking her gently, oh, so gently *per capita,* he gave her a sweeping *coup d'oeil.*

Then he was gone forever.

"Ish ka bibble," bleated Phrynette as she lighted a fresh Pall Mall with *elan.*

ONLY once in an actor's life does he really rise to the splendid heights expected of him. That's when he retires.

THE length of a woman's kiss nearly always depends upon the breadth of her imagination.

THE ENCHANTED NIGHT

By James Nicholas Young

A SOLITARY man stood in the heart of the forest. It was midnight and the fragrant air was liquid with warm, golden tropic moonlight. In the purple shadows rose giant, ghostly trees, their ancient limbs weighted with spectral tangles of gray moss, amid whose placid streamers caressing breezes whispered the secrets of the silent places.

Now and then some creature of the wilds gave plaintive utterance to his melancholy; and, like faint echoes of echoes, equally lugubrious responses were wafted back from the mysterious, stygian distance.

It was such an enchanted night as fairies, when the world was younger and sweeter, were wont to delight in. It was such a night as, in olden times, divinities chose for their earthly visitations. It was such a night as must inevitably flood the souls of the children of men—God's favorite creations—with wonderful, evanescent thoughts transcending expression, of inexpressible loftiness and subtleness, unutterably beautiful, touching the fringes of the Infinite!

The rare glory of the lovely scenes did not fail to exert its potent influence upon the solitary man. For long he stood, silent, immobile, gazing fixedly into the soft purple and gold and silver-gray harmonies of the enchanted realms surrounding him. Then of a sudden, as though the reality of some immense, vaguely surmised truth of surpassing beauty had entered his poor, petty, befogged consciousness and moved him strangely, upon his sorrowful countenance appeared an expression of eager anticipation—a rapt look such as the brave old martyrs of days gone by no doubt assumed as they joyously contemplated a superb entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. He cautiously inserted his hand in his hip pocket, and, with infinite care, drew forth a heavy object—evidently very precious.

"I guess I'll have another drink!" said the man.

THERE are still some women one can admire. For instance, the woman who refuses to kiss, and does not change her decision.

HOW fortunate are those people who marry early in life! They lose their illusions before they are old enough to regret them.

LINES ON A LOAD OF HAY

By Charles Divine

THERE passed along the canyoned city street a load of hay.
I stopped. The wind was from the South.
It touched the rigging's mound and brought to me
The scent of those so far forgotten days
Of last year's Summer—keenly redolent
Of the broad fields and the beating sun,
The click and the whir and the singing hum
Of the mowing machine, and the flashing tines
Of the lifted forks in the windrow lines
As the hay was rolled into shining cocks.

The driver, leather-capped and grave, stopped his horses.
I seized a wisp of the trailing hay and thrust it to my nose
As if it were an amorous glove.
The driver looked and nodded knowingly:
"Fifteen dollar a ton I'll get."
I stood and gaped at the fool, amazed,
Who could talk of commercial barter and sale
Of such perfume by the ton!
For rather should the yokel turn perfumer
And press the fragrant timothy into a bottled essence
Such as strong men buy for gentle women
At five dollars an ounce.
Lovers might then linger longer near their sweets,
Reminded by the perfume of wholesome meadows
Or—Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

IT must be dreadful to meet at dinner the man who ran away with one's wife. It places one under such an obligation.

THE disease of the present, or cabaret, age is a rush of brains to the feet.

A POET is one who dreams when he plays and works when he dreams.

THE SUPREME HUMILIATION

By James Royal

I

A letter from Lady Hilda Westways to Suzanne, Countess of Clermont:

LONDON, May twenty-eighth.

MY DARLING SUZANNE:

I am overcome by curiosity. Is it true that you have broken with the adorable Raoul? Yesterday, at the Sutherland creature's reception, the impossible Chauvigny assured me that he had seen your blonde-haired giant stalking the streets of Nice with the mien of a melancholy ghost out of a medieval tragedy. But how much can one rely upon the word of a Chauvigny? But later, from another source, I heard that you are spending these exquisite Spring days locked in your boudoir. What does it all mean? Why is Raoul in Nice at this of all seasons of the year? Why have you become a recluse? As you love me, write at once and explain.

In haste,

HILDA.

II

A letter from Suzanne, Countess of Clermont, to Lady Hilda Westways.

PARIS, June first.

DEAREST HILDA:

Alas, it is true! I have broken with Raoul. And, oh, the pity of it! He, poor boy, has fled to Nice to nurse his sorrow in solitude. I am in Paris, lonely and inconsolable, ruining my eyes and my complexion by my constant weeping.

But it had to be. My pride demanded it. And to women like me, pride alone can make demands which must be met at the cost of no matter how much sorrow.

Shall I tell you all about it? Why not? Perhaps it will help me to pour forth my woes into friendly and sympathetic ears.

Listen, then:

Did I ever tell you of my first meeting with Raoul? I was at the De Grammont's chateau, in Normandy. I was very unhappy. Thanks to that same impossible Chauvigny, I had just learned that my highly moral husband was conducting a vulgar affair with a little actress from the Outer Boulevards. Of course, I had never loved Henri. One cannot love a man who preaches temperance before breakfast and at that meal consumes food enough to feed a starving family for a week. But, at the same time, it did hurt me to think that he had turned from me to—to such a creature as—as— Heavens, I have forgotten her name!

Naturally, I was in a mood to become interested in almost anyone. Raoul Villemont came from Paris for the shooting, and I became interested in him. At first, he appealed only to my sense of the ridiculous. He was so big, so awkward, so shy. Actually, he would blush when a woman spoke to him. It delighted me to lure him into secluded corners and play with him as a cruel cat plays with a helpless mouse. It was a charming pastime.

Before I realized what I was doing, I had made the poor boy hopelessly in love with me. I discovered the fact at the card table one night. Raoul was sitting at my left. In reaching towards him to gather up the cards, my hand touched his. I felt him tremble. I

looked into his eyes and saw that they were brimming with tears. It was quite absurd.

Then, one night, at one of those awful country dances, I let him take me into the conservatory so that I might adjust the ribbons of my corsage which a clumsy artillery colonel had almost succeeded in ruining as he dragged me through what he was pleased to call a dance. There was a spirit of mischief in my heart. Perhaps I deliberately let one of the straps which held my bodice slip from my shoulder. I don't remember. But I do remember the look in Raoul's face, so suddenly pale. It amazed me by its intensity. In it there was worship and passion and unspeakable longing. I made some banal remark. Raoul did not answer me. Instead, he murmured an apology and literally fled from my presence.

His actual declaration came three days later. It was a day much like this unhappy day when I pen these lines. There was the same mild sun, the same gentle breeze, the same air of brooding melancholy hovering over everything. We were walking in the forest close to the chateau, searching for I cannot remember what sort of flower. We had been out a long time and I was tired and a little bored. Never a very talkative companion, on that day, Raoul was more than usually silent and constrained. I tried in a thousand ways to rouse him from his lethargy. My efforts were quite futile. I wished him a thousand miles away.

We reached a point where a huge tree had fallen across the path. Raoul vaulted the obstacle easily. He turned to assist me. I waved him aside, determined to be independent of my sullen and uninteresting companion. I climbed to the top of the log without mishap. But as I jumped to the ground on the other side, my gown caught on a projecting twig and I fell forward into Raoul's outstretched arms. He held me very close, and suddenly I was aware that he was crying words of love into my ear.

I managed to free myself from his embrace. Then I turned on him and told him that he had dared too far; that he had insulted me; that he had forfeited his every right to my regard. I told him all that and more and when I had done, I had worked myself into a very pretty rage.

My words affected Raoul queerly. At first he seemed dazed and he looked at me with the half-hurt, half-wondering expression one sees upon the face of a child who is being scolded unjustly. Then, he changed. His face became scarlet; his lips trembled over his clinched teeth; his eyes, usually so quiet, so kind, flashed fire. It was a wonderful moment. I was almost afraid of him.

The things he said to me during the next few minutes will not bear repeating.

I have never seen a man so angry. Of course, his main accusation of me was that I had led him on to believe that a declaration of love from him would not be unexpected or unwelcome. He said that I had played with him in the manner of a cocotte. He ended by calling me a common cheat.

You know how I am when I am truly angry. You know how I can control myself, how well I can dissemble. Neither by a word nor by a glance did I let Raoul know how he had enraged me. Instead, I played the pretty penitent. I admitted the justice of some of his accusations. I begged for his forgiveness. I—it makes me smile even now to think of it—I promised to do what I could to make myself worthy of his pardon. And all the while, my brain was searching for a means to revenge myself upon the huge, impossible man who had dared to call me a common cheat.

Due to my cleverness as an actress, we returned to the chateau as friends, on the surface, at least. I do not know what were Raoul's emotions during that painful walk home. But I do know that my mind was filled with thoughts of bitter, bitter hate towards my companion.

That evening, at dinner, De Gram-

mont was telling us of the death of one of his illustrious ancestors.

Raoul interrupted his host.

"Pardon," he said, "but did you say that this Central Committee sent their verdict to the Duke by one of the lowest servants in the chateau?"

"Yes."

"That must have been the supreme humiliation," Raoul went on; "to think of hearing your fate from the lips of a rough, common peasant! Ugh!"

He shuddered. An instant later, De Grammont continued his story. But in that instant my plan for revenge upon Raoul came to me full formed, as you might say, and ready to be put into action. Throughout the rest of the dinner, I exulted internally.

Chauvigny was standing at the piano, singing Rudolfo's plaintive narrative, when later I called Raoul to my side. In a whisper which could barely be heard above the singer's exquisite, silver tones, I asked:

"Am I forgiven, Raoul?"

He did not reply. I might have thought that he had not heard me had I not noticed that his hands, lying idly in his lap, trembled.

I hurried on, "Don't answer me now. Wait. I shall come to you tonight in the darkest corner of the conservatory—at midnight, I shall come—and then you may tell me what—what I want to hear."

He turned so suddenly in his chair that he threatened to attract the attention of everyone in the room.

"Do you mean that?" he whispered fiercely.

I nodded, and then to my neighbor on the other side I remarked upon the beauty of Chauvigny's voice.

At about eleven, I pleaded a headache and excused myself to my hosts. I hurried to my room. Once there, I sent my maid to the kitchen with orders to return with a certain, evil-looking scullery maid whom I had noticed one day while on my way to the stables. A few minutes later, Annette returned, dragging the protesting and frightened child with her.

"Child," I said, when Annette had left the room, "do you want to earn ten francs?"

Her greedy eyes glistened.

"Mais, oui, madame," she answered briskly.

"Do you know which of the guests is M. Raoul Villemont?"

"Oui, madame."

"Good!" I glanced at my watch. It lacked five minutes of the hour. "At midnight, you will seek him in the conservatory and you will say to him, these words—'Madame the Countess of Clermont prefers to rest to hearing the impassioned words of a love-sick fool.' Can you remember?"

The child courtesied. A malicious light gleamed in her small, heavy-lidded eyes.

"I think that I can remember, madame," she said, smiling faintly.

I gave her her ten francs and dismissed her.

Then I rang for my maid and retired. My dreams that night were exceedingly pleasant. Raoul's words repeated themselves in my mind, over and over again. "To hear one's fate from the lips of a rough, common peasant! Ugh! The supreme humiliation!"

I awoke laughing. Truly, in sending him my message by that disgusting scullery maid, I had achieved my revenge.

I bathed and dressed in haste. Pausing only long enough to snatch a cup of coffee and leave a note of apology for my hosts, I ordered my motor and set out for Paris.

Women are ever slaves to their emotions. Seldom are they swayed by the great masculine God of Logic. Only another woman can understand the change which came over me before my motor had covered a dozen miles toward Paris. Strange as it may seem, I discovered that I was no longer proud of the trick I had played on Raoul. I began to feel a little ashamed of myself. Considering him largely, he was really a very nice boy. And I had humiliated him without just cause—or so it seemed to me at the moment. I pic-

tured the scene. Raoul awaiting my coming in the dark room, the blood drumming through his veins, words of love trembling on his lips. A form glides toward him. He reaches out to clasp it in his arms. Then the words in the scullery maid's hoarse, peasant voice, "Madame, the Countess of Clermont, prefers—"

I could go no further.

My eyes were blinded with tears.

There came a desire to make amends; a desire to pay my poor Raoul with my happiness for that one awful moment. I ordered my chauffeur to go with all speed to the nearest telegraph office. A few minutes he drew up before the station at M——— and I descended to send my wire.

"Come to me at once. Suzanne."

That was the message which I sent to Raoul. I sent it with a prayer that he would understand and obey my summons. An hour later I was in Paris.

All of that afternoon I waited for Raoul in my little boudoir, although I well knew that he could not possibly be with me before evening. The train service from L———, which is the nearest town to De Grammont's chateau is abominable. Still—I recalled the line one has read in Stendahl—"To achieve the impossible is a lover's delight." And if despite my treatment of him, Raoul were still my lover . . .

I was rewarded for my loyalty to the off chance. Raoul came to me just at dusk. I learned afterwards that he had spent a thousand francs chartering a special train to Paris. He came to me puzzled, anxious—a little frightened. He stood in the doorway, hesitating, uncertain, his lips framing the question which I dreaded, "Why?"

Before the word was spoken, I had run to him and placed a hand upon his lips.

"Raoul," I cried, "will you be generous? Will you let the past be forgotten and never referred to between us? Will you start all over with me now—tonight?"

For a moment he considered me gravely. Then he smiled and nodded. With a cry of perfect happiness, I threw myself into his arms. I could hardly believe that for the asking I had received that for which I had expected to plead on my bended knees. I was forgiven! Raoul's great, generous nature had responded to my first demand upon it. I was supremely happy. In that moment I did not love Raoul—I worshipped him. How the gods must have laughed!

Of all that happened between us from that moment to the moment of our parting you have known much and suspected more. I shall not linger over the dear, dead days when I dwelt in paradise. Let me tell you of our last, tragic meeting and have done.

It was six weeks ago. Dear God, is it only six weeks since the cup of joy was dashed from my lips! Raoul and I were riding in the Bois. Our horses had turned down a familiar and deserted path, and, as was our custom, we had reined them in to a snail's pace. We talked of our plans, of our love, of our happiness.

"We have been happy—you and I, Raoul," I said.

He chose to take my statement as a question.

"Happy, dear heart?" he replied. "Don't you know we are?"

I pressed his hand in answer.

We rode on in silence. My thoughts ranged over the days we had spent together since that afternoon in my apartment. Raoul had been perfection. How could one help being happy with. . . It startled me to hear a thought similar to my own voiced by my companion.

"How could one help being happy with a woman like you?" Raoul said.

I smiled into his serious eyes.

"So tender, so generous, so forgiving," he went on. "I wonder—"

I interrupted him. "It is odd to hear you speak of my generosity and of my ability to forgive—you who have been so generous to me and who forgave so much."

"But you, too, had much to forgive," he said gravely. "And you forgave much."

I fell a prey to a strange presentiment. I knew that Raoul would continue; that he would tell me something which I should hate to hear, which would bring me misery unspeakable. Yet I was powerless to speak, powerless to change the trend of our conversation and direct it toward a safer topic. I could only wait for my lover's words.

After a minute, which seemed an age, they came.

"I acted the cad that night in the conservatory," he said. "I knew it even as I was doing the beastly thing which was to revenge me for the humiliation which you had put upon me. I knew it as I said to that miserable girl, 'Tell the woman who sent you that I have given to you what I would have given to her had she come to me as she promised.' I knew it as I held her in my arms, as I kissed her, as I— Good God, I was a beast!"

He turned in his saddle and looked into my eyes. What he saw in them caused him to cry out, "You—you didn't know! She didn't tell you!"

I didn't answer. How could I? We were no longer alone. Over Raoul's shoulder a woman's face leered at me. It was a heavy, common face, coarse of feature, loose of lips. It was the face of a scullery maid, disgusting, unclean.

And in that second I knew that always when I gazed upon my Raoul's face I would see that other face—that beastly, peasant face, laughing at me, sneering at me, mocking me. Oh, the supreme humiliation!

I turned my mount and, clinging to the pommel of my saddle to keep myself from falling, I galloped away. I have not seen Raoul since.

Your unhappy friend,

SUZANNE.

IMPRISONED

By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff

LOVE, with a silken cord
My heart enwound.
Joy was my spirit's lord
And singing sound. . . .

After a little space
My heart, in pain,
Wept, for in love's soft place
Was forged a chain!

THE only true function of the engagement announcement is to warn friends in time so that they may cease all correspondence with the principals, thus obviating the necessity of giving a wedding present.

ONE beauty of being single is that it's a dreadfully thrilling experience until one's wife finds it out.

TO-MORROW

By June Gibson

AS I look at Frank I think how insipid blonde men are.

Tom's puerile flaccidity nauseates me.

My flirtation with Jimmie is so boresome that I stifle a yawn behind my fan.

My little Pom shrinks under the *chaise-longue* and snarls when Jack blusters into my presence.

Arthur's braggadocio disgusts me.

When Billy emulates the silence of the Sphinx, I am filled with the desire to sleep . . .

But to-morrow—

To-morrow I shall long to run my slim fingers through Frank's smooth hair.

Tom's yielding grace will give me a delectable thrill.

I shall peep at Jimmie through my thick-fringed violet eyes with my head thrown back to reveal my white throat.

I shall marvel that the cave-man in Jack could ever have left me tepid.

I shall think what a big man Arthur really is.

Billy will be the only man who understands me.

. . . . . .

To-morrow I shall be married to Jerry.

A DINNER

By David Morton

THE brittle light on plates—the eyes of men,
  Chatter of women like a choppy sea
Breaking in little waves of laughter—then
  One chanced to say your name, and suddenly
There was a cool wind blowing down the room. . . .
  And you and I . . . beyond that blaze of light . . .
And little leafy whispers in the gloom,
  And starshine . . . and the tenderness of night.

I kept the talk up, somehow. . . . On my left
  A woman told me of some play she'd seen;
I grinned my interest from beyond the cleft
  Where I had passed to still, soft worlds of green. . . .
Yet, walking home alone, I lacked the power
  To feel you half so near, as in that hour.

THE ROMANCE HUNT

By Charles Divine

IT WAS June. There was a high, red-brick wall. There were red roses by the wall. And on top of the wall, half hidden in the mystery of vines and bushes, sat Victoria Insley, tense, eager, and bewitchingly pretty.

There came to her ears the nearing hum of an automobile. A low, gray roadster shot into view along the smooth, glistening roadway.

Victoria jumped. She landed in the roadway on hands and knees, sprawling directly in the path of the car. The young man at the wheel jammed on the emergency brake and swerved dizzily to one side, stopping within three feet of the girl in the road.

She got to her feet and began brushing her dress. But first she put her hands to her dark, brown hair, and tucked several dislodged wisps into place again.

Richard Packard, leaning forward over the wheel, stared at her astonished. She flicked the dust from the box pleats of her white satin skirt and coat, patted the black and white collar draped rakishly over her shoulders, and at length putting her hands in the pockets of her coat, stood gazing back at Packard wonderingly.

"I made it, didn't I?" she asked with a smile.

He glanced at the high wall and back at her.

"Yes, and you came within an ace of making Kingdom Come!"

There was a trace of admiration in his voice, despite his deprecating tone.

"But I had to do it," she replied, turning back to look at the wall and the roof of the big house beyond.

Packard got an intimate glimpse of her profile: a deliciously round, soft chin; a straight, tip-tilted nose; and well-formed lips with a little curve of roguishness at their corners—or was it wilfulness? He thought he saw a warm, wistful light come into her eyes, soft and gleaming among long lashes.

She turned toward him frankly.

"It was so lonesome back there," she explained.

Her words and disingenuous manner of saying them struck the young man like the plea of a child begging off from punishment after a mischievous escapade. And yet she wasn't a child; she must be at least twenty.

He laughed.

"Then jump in," he invited. "Two is company and an automobile is a reliable chaperon."

"Providing you keep it moving," she amended, getting in beside him.

She slumped down comfortably into the low seat, stretched out her feet, and tucked her dress about her knees.

"I like the car," she remarked. She didn't confide in him that she also liked his white flannel trousers and blue serge coat. She would save that for another day. Praise of this car was sufficient now. "I love low, gray racers. They're like the ghost of the west wind streaking along the road at twilight."

The simile gave him a pleasurable feeling.

He was too busy shifting gears, however, to give her more than a quick, sidelong glance.

She took advantage of his occupation to study his face. His features were strong and clean-cut; she liked his brown eyes and thick, brown hair, brushed back from his forehead and

parted on the left. He was just as good-looking at close range as she had imagined he would be: when she sat hidden on the top of the wall those other afternoons and watched his car go past —and then hurried away to make investigations about him. One book, of automobile license numbers, had told her that he was Richard Packard; and the other book, the *Social Register*, had told her that he belonged to *the* Packards, who had just opened a new Summer home in the South Shore colony.

The car shot along the road, past the wall bounding the estate from which she had leaped so astoundingly.

Packard turned to her.

"Do you know what I think?" he asked, looking straight in the face. "I think you jumped off that wall purposely—in front of my car."

Her glance never wavered.

"I did," she admitted. "Of course I did!"

He was more surprised than if she had denied it. He slowed down the car.

"And you were a little bit scared afterwards, weren't you?"

When she hesitated, he went on: "I could tell by the expression of your face. You looked like a frightened fawn."

"You mean a terrified cow, don't you? The way I sprawled in the road."

"But why did you do it?"

"Because I wanted to be sure you would stop. I wanted to get away from home—if only for a little while. I saw your car coming. To me it looked friendly—some one who would listen to me and be kind to me perhaps. I saw you were a man. I thought a man would understand."

"Understand what?"

"Oh"—a note of despair came into her voice—"how I'm shut in by that wall! It runs all the way around the grounds. I think father took the place just on account of the wall—to keep me penned in. But that wall isn't the worst barrier I'm up against. That's only a material one. There are a hundred spiritual ones far more cruel: hedged about by conventions, watched at every step, condemned at every misstep . . ."

Over Packard's face came a look of amazement. He felt an instinctive sympathy for her; her words had come tremulously, on the verge of sobs.

"What's the matter with your father?" he demanded gruffly, as if he were asking the question of the unreasonable parent himself.

"Oh," she sighed; "I suppose it's his lumbago that does it."

"Has he got lumbago?" Packard could understand that. His own father was afflicted with it.

"Yes, and the gout, too," she added. "It makes him hard and—and almost brutal at times. Today he ordered me not even to leave the house. And mother—there's no help there."

"Why not?"

"She's as bad as father."

"Not the gout, too?"

"Only in her soul, I guess. She brought me down here for the summer —down here where the fields are so green and the white roads so alluring; and then she, too, acquiesced in father's scheme to keep me forever in the house. She—she doesn't want me to meet any nice young men—or bold young men; adventurers in her eyes. She thinks they would want to marry me. She seems to be afraid that if I were allowed any freedom I'd dash out and be seized by the first cave-man that came along, and be carried off screaming to his lair." She tried to summon a laugh. "But she's wrong. I wouldn't scream at all."

He was watching her face, and in the intensity of his gaze he had forgotten the accelerator. The car was lessening its speed.

She smiled bravely.

"The chaperon is running down."

"All right," he said, and speeded ahead. "But when *does* your mother think you should marry?"

She pouted. It was a pretty pout, and it enhanced the soft witchery of her lips.

"Oh, mother says: 'Victoria, you shall never marry until your father and I decide the time is ripe.'"

"But the time *is* ripe," said Dick Packard, watching her lips, fascinated. "As ripe as a cherry."

"But the bridegroom is late," she added gaily.

He leaned toward her.

"Maybe," he said softly, "maybe he can make it up in the next mile."

"Look out for that tree!"

She shouted just in time. He turned the car back into the middle of the road and blushed. It was the first time Dick Packard had blushed in the presence of a girl in weeks.

"But here I've told you all about myself!" she cried. "Now *you* tell me about *you*."

He blushed again. He needed more urging before he would respond to that topic. Victoria urged wisely and well as they covered the four miles to the Old Spring bridge, and by the time they had turned around and started back along the road, she had long since achieved the stage where she knew his college, his fraternity, his ambitions, and his favorite musical comedy. He was telling her that she wasn't the only one who faced parental obstacles. His own father, he said, had threatened to cut him off without a penny unless he married a girl the elder Packard had picked out for him. Dick described her as ugly and scrawny. Her name was Marietta Cole.

"It even sounds that way, doesn't it?" he asked.

"Yes," she agreed, "kind of shivery. You—you don't love her, then?"

For answer he first sent the car flying ahead. Then he said:

"No!"

Victoria put one hand lightly on his arm.

"I'm almost home again," she said whimsically. "I see the grim walls of the prison ahead. Do you suppose you can prevail on the chaperon to moderate her gait? I suppose I'll be locked in the cellar and fed bread and water for a week now—if they find out I've been away from the place."

He stopped the car in front of the gate. It was a huge, iron gate, with heavy grill-work, set solidly in the wall. They got out.

"I'm afraid it's locked," she said, regarding the gate resignedly.

"Shall I try it?" He threw his whole weight against it, but the gate didn't budge. "Locked!"

"Yes. Father keeps the key."

"Who is that I see in there in the garden?"

"That old Peter, the gardener. He's the only friend I've got, but even he wouldn't dare let me in if he could. I guess I'll have to go back over the wall."

She turned to him. "Do you suppose you could give me a boost?"

"Easily, but when am I going to see you again?"

"Tomorrow maybe—if you'd like to—and I can get away."

"I'd like to!" he said emphatically, and bent over to help her up the wall.

"You mustn't look," she warned him. "Turn around and stoop over and I'll get on your shoulders."

He obeyed.

There was a flash of silk-clad ankles as she sprang to the top of the wall.

She looked down at him and laughed.

"You never looked at all," she complained.

"But you told me not to."

"Dickie," she scolded, "you take me too literally."

He reached up for her hand.

"Little fawn," he said earnestly, "I'd take you any way I could!"

Another laugh, a weltering sheen of white, and she disappeared from the wall, leaving Dick Packard gaping at it foolishly.

II

MAKING her way through the shrubbery and across the lawn, Victoria Insley walked happily toward the big house. Beneath its wide balcony she stepped onto the veranda in the shade of the red and white striped awnings. Through one of the open French windows she entered the drawing room.

John Insley looked up from the maga-

zine he was reading. He was a big man with grayish hair and a great number of wrinkles at the corners of his gray eyes.

"Hello, Dad!" she cried, running up to him and slapping him on the shoulder.

"Hello, Vic," he said, laying aside his magazine. "My little will-o'-the-wisp has been out again. Say! What did you do with the key to the gate? Peter says you took it."

'Yes, here it is."

She placed it on the table beside him."

"What if your mother and I had decided to go out in the car?" he inquired jovially. "We would have been forced to motor through the wall. And it's not good for the tires."

"Go *over* the wall," she advised, smiling. "That's the best way. I did." She was searching the table. "My cigarettes are all gone, Dad. May I have one of yours?"

"If you can find any. I think there are some Murads in that box over there."

"Thanks. Yes, there are. Oh, Dad! I've news: I've met a man."

Mr. Insley looked at her with mock astonishment:

"A real man, Vic? Down here in this place?"

"As real as they make 'em!"

Mr. Insley leaped to his feet. There were no signs of lumbago or gout apparent in his extraordinary behavior. He suddenly danced a jig step.

"Ethel!" he cried. "Oh, Ethel!"

From a nearby room floated an answering call from Mrs. Insley.

"Come here, dear. Vic's met a man! I don't believe it, but she says so."

Mrs. Insley, a kindly faced woman, came into the room with a sewing basket in one hand and a half-knitted sweater in the other. Under her arm was a copy of *Vanity Fair*.

"Repeat that astonishing disclosure, John," she urged.

"Vic's met some kind of a man," he repeated. "She says he's real. But I don't know whether she pinched him to find out or not."

He supplemented his announcement with a genial bow toward his wife and a wave of his hand toward his daughter.

'Name, age, place of residence, and stocks and bonds?" inquired Mrs. Insley.

"Dick Packard," replied Victoria, sitting down on the arm of a chair and facing her mother and father. "His father has just built that big place near the west road."

"Herbert Packard's boy!" exclaimed Mr. Insley. "They've got oodles of money, dear." He turned to his wife: "Even more than we have. The Packards have always had it. Well, well, and our Vic has met the son of the house."

"Uh-huh," said Victoria, meeting her father's bantering tone complacently. "I just happened to fall in with him."

"And I suppose you'll fall out with him the same way," Mrs. Insley sighed and sank into a chair. "That's the worst of you, Victoria. We've spoiled you until your temper unfits you for anybody except an angel."

Mr. Insley interrupted his wife hopefully.

"But maybe this young Packard is an angel and Vic will get him to take her under his wing."

"And off our hands," added Mrs. Insley. "I hope so, but it sounds too good to be true."

Victoria stood up.

"Now, mother! The way you talk, father would think you're just aching for a chance to marry me off and get rid of me."

"Not *aching*, Vic," corrected Mr. Insley. "Just itching. Then your mother and I could go off on that cruise we've planned for our second honeymoon."

"But listen, Dad," objected Victoria. "Dick Packard's father wants him to marry somebody else—a girl named Marietta Cole."

"Marietta Cole?" Mr. Insley reflected. "I don't know her, but can't you circumvent that choice? If you want my help, I'll give it gladly. What's one girl more or less in the way?"

"Nothing at all," responded Victoria

airily. "It makes it more romantic."

Mr. Insley nodded approvingly.

"That's it, Vic. Get all the romance you can while you're young. It gives your memory something to tingle over when you're old."

III

THE next day, when Dick Packard stopped his car in front of the Insley place, it was still June. The high, red-brick wall was still there. And red roses by the wall. But no white-clad fawn was on the wall.

Dick waited.

At length the iron gate swung ponderously open, and old Peter, the gardener, came sidling out. He stood and squinted at the car and its driver.

"Gray auteemobeel, close to the ground," he said, as if repeating a lesson, "wire spokes in the wheels, young man in the flannel trowsers—Mr. Packard. Is that it?"

"That's it," acknowledged Dick.

"Then here's a note for you."

And the gardener, after handing the young man the letter in a gnarled, brown hand, went back inside the wall and locked the gate after him.

Dick opened the note and read:

"Father discovered somehow that I went outside the grounds yesterday. To punish me he has locked me in my room. But I got old Peter—the only one here who loves me—to promise to deliver this note to you. We can trust Peter. Tomorrow at four I will try to be at the south corner of the wall—if they let me out. Victoria."

Dick felt mad, and he felt happy. Mad to think of her imprisoned in her own home by a gouty, irascible father. It was barbaric. It was medieval. People didn't do such things these days! His heart was full of sympathy for her. And happy to think that she cared enough for him to risk further punishment by sending him this note. Signed Victoria! He read it again. That "we" in "we can trust old Peter" was significant; it meant companionship . . . And that about old Peter: "the only one here who loves me." It wasn't right. Dick would show her that old Peter wasn't the only one who loved her! Where *was* old Peter anyway? He deserved a guerdon. Dick looked around, but old Peter was gone, the gate was locked, and through its bars Dick peered belligerently at the forbidding casements of the distant house.

Now he would have to wait a whole day before seeing her again. And perhaps—this thought came to him with a sudden shock—perhaps she wouldn't be able to meet him even tomorrow.

He jumped in his car and drove it so savagely and far that he ran out of gasoline before he knew it. But he had had time to think over the whole situation, which grew more fantastically stirring each moment, and to build delicious pictures of Victoria: visions which also increased in adorableness with each surge of his restless fretting. Nothing had excited him so much in years.

By four o'clock the next afternoon, when happily he saw Victoria slip from the wall to greet him, she had been so constantly in his mind that she now appeared transcendently fitted for inhabiting the castle in Spain he had built for her. And he, the builder, was also to be its lord.

He listened to the story of her imprisonment.

But Victoria, although she told the tale in a manner to move him, put just enough aloofness in her attitude to keep him stinging with uncertainty as to how she would treat his proposal of marriage. Would she be grave and naïve, or would she laugh at him elfishly, as he knew she could do so well?

Through the succeeding days on which they took long, thrilling rides, he grew more and more anxious, until finally he stopped the car dead still in the middle of the open road one afternoon and asked her to marry him.

She pursed up her lips and looked at him with an air of deep pondering. What would Marietta Cole think, she asked.

"I don't care!" he declared. "Even

if I *am* cut off without a penny! I'm game if you are."

"And what would we live on, Dickie?"

"Oh"—he looked at her longingly—"on bread and cheese and kisses."

"Bread and cheese and kisses," repeated Victoria, reflecting. "Foodstuffs are going up every day."

"Then we'll economize on the bread and cheese."

"Just what I wanted you to say, Dick."

She leaned toward him and gave him a long, rapturous kiss. A Ford delivery truck rattled past, but they never heard it.

They fell to discussing ways and means. It would have to be an elopement, of course, said Victoria, and it would have to be such a one as never occurred before in history, requiring amazing stealth, for her room overlooking the balcony was next to the suite in which her mother and father slept like watchdogs. And she would have to elope with him in the dead of night; she could have her things ready, and, if they were terribly quiet about, they might get a good start before her absence was discovered and any pursuit organized.

She rested one hand in his and looked far off across the fields.

"It's romance, Dick!" she breathed. "And you'll have to fetch a rope ladder."

He promised. He told her he would have the Justice of Peace at Old Spring sitting up waiting for them, and with him, his son, who was the license clerk, and his wife, who would be a witness. The details were settled, and Dick helped Victoria scramble over the wall to her home.

And this time she didn't ask him to turn his back.

IV

VICTORIA found her mother and father bending over a big volume in the library, their heads close together. As she came up behind them, they drew apart guiltily and her father made a futile effort to conceal the book.

"I see!" cried Victoria. "The maps. Go ahead and pick out the course for your cruise. It's all right. Little Victoria's going to elope tonight at twelve-fifteen."

For a moment they stared at her fatuously, after which Mr. Insley swooped down upon her and grabbed her by both hands, swinging her about in a circle and chanting: "Ring-a-Round a Rosie!" His wife made him desist long enough to enable her to put some questions to Victoria to make certain that her announcement had not been spoken in jest. Then Mrs. Insley, too, beamed.

"Oh, Dad," said Victoria in a playful transport, "I feel as if I'd had a cocktail."

"Maybe you have."

"I feel," she continued, "as if I were up in the clouds hanging onto the sky by my finger-nails and kicking my heels over the heads of the angels."

Mr. Insley glanced shrewdly at his wife.

"Vic is in one of her exalted moods," he commented.

"I hope it lasts," replied Mrs. Insley.

Mr. Insley took out his watch and began winding it.

"Twelve-fifteen, did you say, Victoria? I wonder if I'm slow."

V

DICK PACKARD stopped his car at the far end of the wall. It was ten minutes after midnight as he looked at his watch.

Climbing out of the car, he paced impatiently up and down the fringe of the road, a silver riband tinselled by the moonlight lying over the whole countryside, soft and dream-tinted. At thirteen minutes after twelve he couldn't wait any longer.

He scaled the wall and made his way stealthily toward the house, choosing the shadowy spaces where he could.

Standing beneath Victoria's window, he tossed a pebble against the casement and looked up expectantly, but Vic-

toria didn't appear. He threw another pebble. No face at the window, yet he could see the thin curtains move in the light breeze. The other windows were dark, too, arguing that Mr. and Mrs. Insley were sleeping profoundly, as he hoped they were.

Two more pebbles . . . two more minutes.

At length he drew back his arm and flung a whole handful of stones. Some of them fell inside the window, loudly. He quaked. It was enough to wake the dead!

But even then he got no sight of Victoria. Through his mind flashed thoughts of Victoria bound and gagged, or spirited off to the cellar.

He stepped upon the veranda and began climbing a pillar, pulling himself up by the jutting edges of the bricks. Once on the balcony he quietly top-toed to her window and looked in.

A moonbeam fell slantingly into the room and touched the bed. Victoria lay there, *asleep!*

Dick muttered something, exasperated. This was a pretty thing to do; to forget an appointment to elope. And Vic had been so keen for the romance of it! But, poor girl, maybe her tired, little brain, worn by the vicissitudes of strife at home, had succumbed to a natural sleep of exhaustion.

He stepped inside and bent over the bed.

"Vic," he breathed, putting his mouth close to her ear. "Vic, it's Dick. Vic, dear!"

She didn't move; so he shook her.

Gradually she came drifting back to consciousness, blinked her eyes, and sat up.

"Vic, how *could* you?" he protested in a whisper. "It's long after twelve."

She swung to the edge of the bed, radiant in a maze of lazy stuff.

"I'm so sorry, Dick. Forgive me. I only intended to take forty winks."

"All right, dear. But we must hurry."

"Then go out on the balcony, Dick. I'll be ready in a couple of minutes."

Outside of her window, he pressed himself close to the side of the house until she appeared, carrying two bags.

"The rope ladder?" she murmured.

"Yes," he returned. "I'm fixing it."

From underneath his coat he had extricated a mass of interwoven ropes, one end of which he fastened about the balcony pillar. He tied the other end through the handles of the two bags and lowered the luggage to the ground. Following, he himself went down to test the ladder, holding it secure at the ground to enable Victoria to descend.

Once on the lawn, they kissed and fled like wraiths out to the road.

From a window next to Victoria's room, Mr. and Mrs. Insley, peering nervously out from behind the curtains, saw the two figures vanish over the wall.

"They've gone!" sighed Mrs. Insley. "I don't know whether to laugh or cry."

Her husband touched her fondly on the shoulder.

"Let's laugh, dear," he suggested. "Later on we can cry, if we find that he isn't a good huband to her. My dear, did you see the rope ladder?" He chuckled.

"I did," replied Mrs. Insley. "What nonsense! He could just as well have come in the front door with a brass band—as long as he's a decent chap."

"Oh, he's decent enough. Good people, the Packards. The young fellow has got the Justice of Peace at Old Spring waiting up for him."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, Vic called him up on the phone to corroborate the arrangements. No slip there."

Mrs. Insley sighed again, with evident relief.

"John, I feel like giving that young man a medal."

"If he ever gets Victoria's temper up—and lives through it—he'll deserve a medal." Mr. Insley snickered. "He'll get the Victoria Cross."

Mrs. Insley left the window and, switching on the lights, sat down on the edge of the bed.

"I can't sleep, John. I'm too excited over this."

"Then let's hold a conversational celebration."

Seated side by side, they went over in review many of the impetuous incidents of Victoria's youth—and their own youth; their talk was commingled of reminiscence and anticipation.

"Now after we get to Bermuda," announced Mr. Insley, "we can head for—"

"What was that, John?" Mrs. Insley sat up, alert. "Did you hear a noise?"

They listened.

Mrs. Insley seized her husband by the arm.

"Downstairs," she said. "Somebody just came in the door. They're coming upstairs, and making no bones about keeping quiet either!"

"It sounds," began Mr. Insley, his face going suddenly white, "it sounds like Victoria—"

"When she's mad," added Mrs. Insley in a faint voice.

They turned toward the hall and gazed fixedly at the doorway, through which burst Victoria, flushed and dragging her traveling bags with a reckless disregard for her knees.

Holding her head high in the air, she strode angrily past them and entered her own room.

Mr. and Mrs. Insley hurried after her and saw her fling herself down on her rumpled bed. She began a pugilistic attack on her pillow.

"Wh—where is Packard?" stammered Mr. Insley weakly.

Victoria waved a flaming fist above her head.

"Don't ask me," she cried. "It's all off!"

"All off?" echoed her mother and father, looking woefully into each other's faces.

Mr. Insley was the first to grapple masterfully with the situation.

"I knew it!" he lamented. "I knew it. Just our luck. Oh, Vic, why didn't you hold onto him?"

Victoria rolled over and faced her father.

"Because he deceived me!" she said, flaring up.

Mrs. Insley grew agitated.

"Did he dare to trifle—"

"No, no," interrupted Victoria, "not that. It was worse. Do you remember, I told you that he said his father threatened to cut him off without a cent unless he married Marietta Cole? Do you remember—"

"Yes, yes," put in Mr. Insley breathlessly.

"Well, I didn't mind his being cut off like that. I—I rather liked it. I told him we could live on—on—"

"Yes, yes, Vic—on me, of course. I'd have given you all you wanted. But go on. Go on."

Victoria paused. She sat up and gazed intently in front of her, as if viewing the great iniquity a-far off.

"Well," she continued, in low, vibrant tones, "when I got out there in the car beside him, and we got ready to start off along the road, he turned to me and said he had a confession to make. He confessed that what he had told me wasn't true at all. His—father—hadn't — threatened — to—cut—him off . . ."

"But—but why should that break up things?" demanded Mr. Insley, amazed. "All the better."

Victoria became petulant.

"Don't you see, Dad? It knocked all the thrill out of it—and half the romance. Dick Packard has got just as much money in his own right as his father."

Mr. Insley, fuming, strode over to his daughter.

"Didn't I tell you, that first day when you met young Packard, that the Packards had always had money? Didn't I? I told you then that I didn't know this Marietta Cole, but that I *did* know how all the Packards stood."

"That's the worst of it, Dad—this Marietta Cole."

"What about her?"

"He—he deceived me, I told you." Victoria gave a violent sob, and buried her face in her pillow. "There wasn't any Marietta Cole!"

MY REVERIE

By Edgar Bennett Davis

I WALKED through Central Park last night. A pale moon, peeping through the sluggishly moving clouds, seemed to throw a fairy light over the cool green grass and the still, sombre lake.

Far away a tall, ghostlike building loomed like a spectre in the faint moonlight, dotted here and there with faint blurs of window light that seemed to fail miserably in their feeble attempt to pierce the shadowy night.

The faint smell of flowers was wafted to my nostrils on the almost still night air.

I closed my eyes. Ah, how it all brought back the memories of the past! Of cool and shaded dells with trickling streams—of the silent woods, with tall trees stretching their leafy hands as if to touch the heavens—and then again the broad, daisy-decked meadows and fields, glowing in the sun of the warm Spring day.

A grassy knoll lay before me. I walked up and sat down, almost unconscious in my reverie. How wonderful, how marvelous are the workings of nature! That unseen hand which guides the life and death; in fact, the very destiny—

A step beside me. Then a gruff voice, issuing from a massive form enclosed in a blue uniform.

"Get off the grass, you! What d'ye think it is, a lodgin' house?"

SUNSET

By Marguerite Wilkinson

THE little, fluttering, yellow rays of light
Are running home to rest
Where the sun broods like a great mother bird
Red, in the low red West;

Broad bands of rose and gold flare up and out
Across a cloud-filled sky,
And stretch with feathery edge against the grey
Like great wings lifted high.

And then are gathered close the little lights,
Then fall the wide, bright wings
In a grey nest of clouds where shadows hide
Their mystic flutterings.

THE GENIUS

By Owen Hatteras

WHEN Professor Phineas Phildoodle finished his reading from the works of Anakananda Raspore, the famous Indian poet, the members of the Smithville Literary Society made manifest their approval of the Oriental's genius by applauding loud and long.

The handclapping having somewhat abated, Samuel Bunker, president of the society, arose and spoke as follows:

"Fellow members: I wish to say that it has rarely been my privilege to listen to poems so replete with the rich philosophy of the Orient and at the same time so permeated with such singular beauty of phrase. Doubtless all of Professor Phildoodle's auditors feel, as do I, that they have received a message from one of the world's great, transcendant geniuses!"

As the meeting broke up a mighty chatter arose concerning the place in literature of the great Raspore. It seemed to be the consensus of opinion of the members that the Indian poet was the premier mystic of the world.

Fifteen minutes later Professor Phildoodle was esconced in a Pullman on his way back to Boston.

"Either I am a genius or else I have proved my contention that there is considerable bunk involved in this sudden craze for Oriental literature," said the vendor of knowledge. Then, with a chuckle, he added: "And to think! It only took me an hour and a half to write the whole darned lot of it!"

AQUARELLE

By E. Murphy

TO lie in water, cool water, water that laps around me in cold little swishes. To feel it between my toes, to wave my hands and feel the current, to feel the soft velvet sand beneath my soles, to pull off the soft mosses that grow on the rocks near the shores. Ferns along the banks, dark rocks below them, dark trees reflected in the water, patches of sunlight on its surface, a blue sky between the deep green leaves, fresh air, air that fills the mind with dreamy dreams. On the hills, purple lupin and golden poppies, fresh green oaks and lavender wild lilac shrub, little fine grass with star flowers, blue gray shadows in the crevices of the hills. No people, no houses, no noises, save the breeze-rustled leaves and soft-trilling bird calls. . . .

"Miss Jones, please take this: Holbrook and Co., Dear Sirs—" Click, click—click—click, click, click. . . .

OLD STUFF

A ONE-ACT PLAY

By Trelawney Dangerfield

CHARACTERS
JOHN FRANKLIN
JESSIE NEWTON
DOROTHY

SCENE: *Mrs. Newton's living-room.*
TIME: *Mid-afternoon in Autumn.*

Mrs. Newton herself is scarcely more than a girl—not possibly over twenty-seven. She is slight, graceful, with fine features and a great deal of charm and self-possession.

She enters from the hall, followed by Franklin, whom she herself has apparently let in at the door. Franklin is a man of thirty, bien mis and well-mannered.

[MRS. NEWTON *is speaking as she enters.*]

MRS. NEWTON:

You come very promptly.

FRANKLIN:

When one times felicity by the clock there are no minutes wasted.

MRS. NEWTON:

That was prettily said.

FRANKLIN:

I don't have to tell you again that the prettiness of a speech is measured by its truth, do I?

MRS. NEWTON:

I think not—but too ready a statement of such truth argues a very full experience; or else the need of convincing yourself.

FRANKLIN:

If you were very ingenuous you would probably believe your own objections—

MRS. NEWTON:

Until you should overrule them by protestations—

FRANKLIN:

But as it is, I know and you know that you believe me, because a man of the savoir faire that you see fit to invest me with by your acquaintance could never, talking to you, be so elementary as to try to disarm you with flattery.

MRS. NEWTON:

Very well turned. I am disarmed. [*A pause.*]

FRANKLIN:

By the way, here's your fan.

[*He produces an ivory fan from his pocket, and examines it before handing it to her.*]

Quite a flimsy thing to hang our further intimacy on, isn't it.

MRS. NEWTON:

Yes, but strong enough for one afternoon, you see—

FRANKLIN:

And an efficient screen for a small compass—which reminds me: henceforth we shall have to invent plausibilities, shan't we?

MRS. NEWTON:

You're an inventive sort of person, aren't you?

FRANKLIN:

Perhaps so, when I can sell imaginings at so much a word. But when I'm confronted with an immediate personal situation like this, I'm very dull.

MRS. NEWTON:

My woman's instinct tells me that our best inventions would fail sooner or later—the best thing is complete openness in such a perceiving world.

FRANKLIN:

My man's instinct tells me that complete openness with a perceiving world means complete repression with ourselves—and that is a very terrible thing. I don't think I could stand seeing you often with people if I couldn't sometimes see you alone.

MRS. NEWTON:

You were able to stand it before last Tuesday night.

FRANKLIN:

I never knew you before last Tuesday night. . . .

MRS. NEWTON:

(*She parries by a complete change of subject.*) Why do people insist on toping at weddings? I think our one bond is that you and I were the only sober people there except the waiters.

FRANKLIN:

Men tope to flatter the bride. We stayed sober to flatter each other. That may have been our only bond at first, but soon I'm afraid it grew into a heavier intoxication than any one else's—but a different kind, I take it.

MRS. NEWTON:

Who knows; you take a trifle too much for granted, perhaps.

FRANKLIN:

It's better to expect too much than too little. When one person takes something for granted another may involuntarily accept the same conclusion. So I suggest that there may be a lot to take for granted.

MRS. NEWTON:

I doubt it—though I suppose the highest degree of intimacy is reached through intoxication. Baudelaire said so.

FRANKLIN:

Frankly, it wasn't so much intoxication of a sort Tuesday night as it was an invitation to the most ravishing delirious saturnalia in the world—a feast such as—

MRS. NEWTON:

(*Interrupting*) Listen!—

[*From outside, apparently on the stairs, comes a child's voice, calling, "Mamma, mamma!"* MRS. NEWTON *answers, "What dear!" and turns to* FRANKLIN, *smiling. There is a slight pause, then*:]

—I'm afraid the R.S.V.P. was left off the corner of the card!

[*Both have risen, and now look at each other. Soon a twinkle lights their eyes, and they burst into bright restrained laughter.*]

MRS. NEWTON:

A little grotesque, isn't it?

FRANKLIN:

Maternally charming. . . . The addition of a side to a triangle makes a rectangle, doesn't it?

MRS. NEWTON:

(*They are both still smiling.*) You are very discerning.

FRANKLIN:

I note you say "discerning," not "clever."

[*The door opens and a little girl of some four years old comes in. She runs to her mother bashfully and looks at* FRANKLIN.]

MRS. NEWTON:

What is it, dear? Dorothy, this is Mr. Franklin; speak to him.

[*They make a charming picture. The child is still abashed by the presence of* FRANKLIN, *and answers, as children will, with her head in her mother's bosom. It is difficult to understand her babble, and impossible to transcribe it.* FRANKLIN *sits calmly; his well-bred smile has the slightest trace of the quizzical, but it is very good-natured.*]

MRS. NEWTON:

(*Soothingly.*) Well, that's a shame —now run and show Mr. Franklin how you can play the victrola. (*Turning to Franklin as Dorothy goes to the instrument.*) We have a new maid, and Dorothy gets lonesome in the nursery. She misses May, her old nurse. (*Calling to Dorothy.*) Yes, dear, put on that record. Have you a needle in? (*To Franklin.*) She's very proud of being able to play the victrola. We get her those little ten-cent records—

[*The machine starts—a clanging, strident march. Conversation is impossible. For a moment the man tries to take an interest in the music, and is about to comment on the precocity of* DOROTHY, *when the noise stops.*]

MRS. NEWTON:

Oh, Dorothy—start the record at the beginning.

[*Both* FRANKLIN *and* MRS. NEWTON *see the absurdity of the situation. Once more the tune starts up, raucous, compelling.* FRANKLIN *has an inspiration.*]

FRANKLIN:

Let's dance; here's music all ready for us.

MRS. NEWTON:

Good.

[*They kick back a rug or two and start dancing. The space is small and the music too fast. But it goes nicely nevertheless, and obviates the necessity of continuing a conversation which the presence of the child might make a trifle anomalous.* FRANKLIN *and* MRS. NEWTON, *both sensitive, are both aware of the subtler shade. To start a totally new conversation on different matters would have been banal. The music stops again since* DOROTHY *has put the needle on near the middle of the record.*]

MRS. NEWTON:

(*Turning to Dorothy and going over to the machine.*) Dorothy, you must put the needle on here.

[*She winds it up, places the needle on the outside of the record, and turns once more to* FRANKLIN. *They begin dancing again.*]

FRANKLIN:

(*As they dance.*) Look at Dorothy.

[*The child is entranced by the dancing and watches intently, wide-eyed and smiling. Sheer delight is pictured in her face. They are both good dancers and the child loves the responsive graceful motion of their step.* FRANKLIN *is the first to come under the spell. He lifts his head and bends his glance compellingly on his partner's face. Then he speaks, very slowly, as they dance. His voice has deepened.*]

FRANKLIN:

Our acquaintance began in each other's arms. . . . You dance too well. . . .

[MRS. NEWTON *glances down. There is a moment's pause.* FRANKLIN *continues.*]

And you danced too often with me last Tuesday . . . do spiritual Bacchantes ever suffer remorse? Think of Pan with a broken pipe and a morning head! . . . (*with apparent irrelevance*) I'm afraid the piper pays, too!

[MRS. NEWTON'S *head droops still more. She says nothing until with a final jangle the music stops. Immediately she goes to the machine, winds it, and replaces the needle.* FRANKLIN *steps forward to meet*

her and they start dancing again. DOROTHY *is forgotten but still watches, entranced. Conversation has died. In silence they continue. Then* FRANKLIN *manoeuvres so that his right side is toward* DOROTHY. *He raises his left hand and brings the palm of* MRS. NEWTON'S *right hand gently to his mouth. With this the situation still further changes its aspect.* MRS. NEWTON'S *face is a little drawn. She slips her left arm farther around* FRANKLIN'S *neck and he folds her closer with his right. The child watches still with delighted eyes. . . .*]

[*The music stops. For an instant they stand as they had been dancing; then quickly* MRS. NEWTON *goes to the machine which* DOROTHY, *still in rapture with the motion and grace of the dance, has let run.*]

FRANKLIN:

(*Shaking off the mood quickly, quoting.*) "No matter how much you love her it is better to stop dancing when the music ceases."

[*Their laugh at this is the least bit strained. Then* MRS. NEWTON *does a strange thing. She takes* DOROTHY *in her arms and kisses her passionately.* FRANKLIN *is alert to this; his involuntary gesture expresses almost displeasure, certainly a kind of pity, and something more.*]

MRS. NEWTON:

Dorothy, run downstairs to Maggie, and ask her to give you some bread and butter and sugar. Run now, and ask politely.

[*She shoos the child out of the room, going to the door with her.* FRANKLIN *stands until she turns. She finds a chair quickly and sits down.* FRANKLIN *sits promptly. The atmosphere is a bit over-charged. It must be lightened at once, so:*]

FRANKLIN:

Dorothy is a pleasant child. Apparently she has tremendous *joie de vivre.*

MRS. NEWTON:

Yes, she is apt and agreeable, I'm happy to say.

FRANKLIN:

But . . . she's rather a tiny thing to assume the importance she does, isn't she?

MRS. NEWTON:

(*Pleased with the remark, sizing up the man by it, as she does.*) That, too, was rather discerning than merely clever. Occasionally I regret it; other times I don't.

FRANKLIN:

It's a feminine prerogative (*A silence.*) The important thing is that Dorothy is quite real.

MRS. NEWTON:

Yes, isn't she?

FRANKLIN:

And besides being quite real, she's a symbol.

MRS. NEWTON:

(*Slowly.*) And her symbolic self is much more real than her real self, you know. . . .

FRANKLIN:

Of course, that's for you to decide, and for me to accept. . . . (*A pause. Franklin resumes in a different, lighter tone.*) You see, the situation, despite the freshness of ourselves, is a bit frayed. I have an aversion, as you have too, to the obvious, the harrowing, the indiscreet. It's quite an artificial aversion; that is, it's the product of environment and breeding—

MRS. NEWTON:

And sagacity—

FRANKLIN:

And sagacity, quite so. . . . But being artificial it's a little uncomfortable—

MRS. NEWTON:

How primitive a sentiment! True undoubtedly, but perhaps not so uncomfortable as the alternative—however, you see that I admit its uncomfortableness.

FRANKLIN:

Such an admission is very gratifying—

MRS. NEWTON:

(*With an indubitable trace of emotion.*) Somehow, I meant it to be gratifying . . . (*with import*) there's no other gratification, you see. Because I cannot be dreary now, or go into minutiæ about conjugal incompatibilities which do not exist. As it happens, my husband loves me, and I love him. . . . We have been very happy together—very happy together.

[*Her tone is the least bit heavy.* FRANKLIN, *at that, has an inspiration. Swiftly he sees light, swiftly he gets out of his chair, and strides over to her. Instinctively she rises.*]

FRANKLIN:

Now I see! Look at me, Jessie. (*He compels her gaze, and goes on speaking very rapidly, very sternly.*) Your last words have put me on the track. You are not happy—I know it—don't deny it, it's no use. I should have seen at first. What can your husband mean to you? I know him, and I realize now—stupid that I am—for the first time that you don't love him—that you can't, that you never could love him! (*Feebly she shakes her head.*) Don't deny it—what's the use? Can't I tell? You're a creature of refinement, a creature of appreciation—sensitive, responsive, high-strung. That man is a boor—dull, tawdry, commonplace. There is a gap in your life never yet filled. There is a gap that should be brimming with beautiful things—things made out of love, honest, gorgeous, responding love. . . . What does Nijinsky—or Debussy—mean to him? What does anything but food and drink and animal torpor mean to him?—There's so much more in life than that! Have you ever been able to find it? Has he ever helped you? Has anyone?

What are you, a *commissionaire*, a steward? No! You are a woman, loving admiration and fine things—more than anything else, loving and needing adoration. Does he give you that? Do you know the subtler shades of love? Have you ever known one minute of passionate generous devotion? Have you ever read in him your own worth, your own power, your own praise? Have you ever known the splendid serenity of feeling yourself worthily loved, worthily worshipped, worthily adored? (*She does not speak. He seizes her arm and fairly grinds the words out.*) You have been true to him, yes!—but Jessie—you have been false to the world that wants your best; and worst of all—you have been false to yourself!

[*Tremulous, faint, exhausted under this battery of words, she sinks back into the chair, and covers her face. Her breathing is almost a succession of sobs, though she is dry-eyed. She is almost conquered.*]

[FRANKLIN *realizes this and kneels beside her—the words are plain.*]

FRANKLIN:

Jessie—I love you! Come to me! . . .

[*Feebly rallying, struggling to command herself, the direct appeal comes like the key to a riddle and resolves simply the situation. He has seized her hands—and the contact does not disarm but steadies her. The moment is long. Then slowly she disengages her fingers.*]

MRS. NEWTON:

(*Softly.*) John—doesn't your artistic sense tell you this is rather banal?

[*He has lost. The direct appeal, the personal element, was a dash of cold water, and now he too suffers a douche. Even her use of his first name cannot alleviate it. He jumps up, knowing that he has lost; worse*

yet, realizing that he has been—not fine. It is a lesson in breeding, and he swiftly cons it.]

FRANKLIN:

(*After a pause, slowly.*) Yes. . . . Yes . . . this has been rather banal. It *is* something to avoid banality!

MRS. NEWTON:

(*Simply.*) It is everything. . . .

FRANKLIN:

(*Musing.*) Everything!

[*She has mastered the situation. Now comes the most dangerous moment—if he but knew it!—when pity surges in her for his distress.*]

MRS. NEWTON:

(*Puts out her hand and lays it on his, tenderly.*) John, you have warmed my heart as it has not been warmed in—a long time! Let me thank you, let me tell you I appreciate you and all this means for you and me. . . . I—I think I almost long for you! . . .

FRANKLIN:

(*Steel again, where softness might have won.*) At least we have evolved a new solution to a tawdry situation—

MRS. NEWTON:

(*Responding at once, though half regretfully, to his new mood, which she appreciates is self-preservation.*) Putting new trimming on old stuff perhaps? . . .

FRANKLIN:

(*Assenting.*) I suppose no trimming wears better than any other, does it?

MRS. NEWTON:

Perhaps not. . . . (*Slower.*) And that I suppose would be our consolation . . . (*He rises, whereupon she does, perceiving he is about to go. She continues.*) . . . at any rate, thanks for returning the fan. It is quite an old one of mother's.

[*They move toward the door while* MRS. NEWTON *rings for the maid. There seems to be nothing to say. She extends her hand, which he takes. She stands perfectly still.* FRANKLIN *bows over her hand, straightens, and drops it. There is no trace of heaviness in the gesture. A maid passes the hall door with* FRANKLIN'S *hat and coat, but does not come in.*]

MRS. NEWTON:

(*Smiling.*) Good-bye, gourmet—

[DOROTHY'S *voice comes from the hall. The child enters, past the restraining arm of the nurse; she is sticky with bread, butter and sugar. All three are standing near the door to the hall.* MRS. NEWTON *puts her arm around* DOROTHY'S *shoulder.*]

[DOROTHY *observes that* FRANKLIN *is about to go; she speaks to her mother.*]

DOROTHY:

Mamma, aren't you going to dance any more?

[*Over the child's head they smile at one another.*]

MRS. NEWTON:

No, dear—not to-day.

FRANKLIN:

Nor to-morrow, Dorothy—Good-bye.

[*He goes out.*]

QUICK CURTAIN

A WELL-KNOWN DON JUAN

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

YOU have heard of him, of course. No doubt you have seen his pictures in newspapers and have shuddered, pleasantly, when you thought of his power over women.

He has had quite a history, it would seem. According to popular rumor, his life has been just one heart affair after anotheer.

At least three are discussed, knowingly, by people he never saw, and, where three have been found out, there must be, of course, six under cover. Oh, he is a bad one!

The first affair that got out, you remember, though there must have been several before that, was that terrible one with Nina Carlsen, the wife of Herman Carlsen, the artist. That was a gay thing. It broke up the Carlsen home, of course. Why not? Didn't Carlsen himself find Artie Duncan—that isn't his real name, but you know his real name, undoubtedly, so what difference does it make—and Nina Carlsen at dinner, a bit more unconventionally and picturesquely clad than people are supposed to be, when dining? So quite naturally, with that, and all the other things that had gone before, Carlsen felt himself the outraged husband and divorced Nina Carlsen, to the approval of all of his friends and her former ones. Carlsen married again, a few months later, a Mrs. Emerson, a sweet little widow, whom he had known for almost a year, and who, of course, consoled him in his trouble. So it was only natural that he consoled *her*—she was a widow for a most unusual reason—her husband had died the summer before—and it was only natural, too, that they should marry.

People rather expected Artie Duncan to marry Nina Carlsen, but he was unprincipled about it and threw her over, as soon as she was free. Nina married later, too—a man with money, and she was even charitably inclined toward Artie, when talking about her affair, after her marriage. But the mark was on Artie by that time. It was then that people hinted at former affairs—but evidently he had been pretty clever at concealing things. But after that. . . .

The next affair was the one with Paula St. Clair, a member of the chorus. You remember Paula? Or you pretend to, anyhow? Paula danced next to the end, on the left, and had black hair and bright eyes and was a good little girl and lived at home in Harlem with her parents and a whole family of little, no, not St. Clairs, but Hopkins, which was the St. Clair's name, originally. Then, Artie Duncan came into the pure little nest and carried away the fair and innocent St. Clair, and, after robbing her of the thing she held most dear, deserted her in his usual base fashion. Paula, like a poor little wild thing, flew to the arms of Crayton, who had a million or so, and is there still, I believe. The papers never used this story, of course, but somehow it got around among Those Who Know Things.

But even that, as you learned if you followed the devilish history of Artie Duncan, wasn't the last. Next, Artie invaded the home of the Pressingtons, Mr. and Mrs.—and there was a child, too, a little girl of six. He broke up the home and carried the wife—and child—away with him. At first people

thought that Pressington would get a divorce and force Artie to marry Alice —in an intense, one-act-playlet moment, but he didn't. Of course, Alice couldn't get a divorce. So Artie and Alice—and Alice's child, the one incongruous touch —and it's an awful atmosphere for a little girl, you can well believe—are living together in an apartment near Washington Square. An immoral life, if there ever was one! Of course, something should be done about it.

Even those who have talked most about Artie admit that, for the time being, he is quiet, for him. In the first place, he is succeeding more than people ever thought he would. He's actually becoming well known as a writer. They even say his stories, about women, are pretty good. Why shouldn't they be? Hasn't he known enough of them? Those Who Know will even hint to you —maybe you have hinted yourself—that some of those seemingly improbable plots, in which a woman always plays the prominent part, are based on Artie's undiscovered affairs, and perhaps aren't so improbable after all. Yes, he is working hard and, from the outside, apparently even settled and happy—if one can be settled—so immorally—but it's best to keep an eye on him. A man with a past like that—and a present—is liable to do anything, any minute. He's a modern Don Juan, all right; the worst kind.

And the only thing the matter with all this is that it isn't true. The real Artie Duncan and his real history are quite different. Though, of course, you won't believe it—or care for it. It's quite more uninteresting.

II

Artie Duncan was born in a little town in Illinois, a couple of hours out of Chicago. He stayed there until he was old enough to attend the State University at Champaign. He was an only child and quite shy. He always was good-looking, the same slim, blond handsomeness that makes him seem so devilish now.

At home he read a great deal and didn't go much with anyone. His parents were poor and quiet. His father was a lawyer in a small way and had once started to write a law textbook, which he sometimes worked on evenings.

At the state university, Artie joined a fraternity, one of the smaller ones, and made a number of boy friends. He didn't go with girls much, though he took a girl to a couple of fraternity dances—her brother was in his fraternity and a fine fellow, too. He sent her a couple of notes the Summer after he left school.

After he left the university, Artie went to Chicago and got a job as a reporter on the *Tribune*, working all afternoon and until eleven or twelve at night. He slept all morning or tried to do short stories before he went out on assignments. He never sold any of his stories. He wasn't even a very good reporter, for he was always interested in the big story he wasn't on, or in watching types or in listening to people who hung around the city room.

After a year, when he was still chasing photographs and writing up small fires or interviewing unimportant people, and doing small articles on space for the Sunday department, he was fired. He hadn't done anything bad—or good. But there was a new crop of college boys who wanted his fifteen a week and who knew a man higher up or showed more energy or looked better, or something. Several times he hadn't got the story he was sent out for —mostly because there wasn't any story to get. There was no one to blame but himself, when he got fired, for, if he had shown unusual ability, there is no doubt that he would have had His Chance and risen to be a Star Reporter, like in the short stories, and, maybe be getting forty dollars every week and sitting in at the City Desk when the City Editor had his day off.

In New York, later, it was said that Duncan was fired on account of a woman. It doesn't seem probable, as the only women he knew in Chicago were

his landlady, a large, several times married woman, who saw him when he paid his room rent—in advance—every Tuesday, she was particular to make a point of it, knowing that the day after pay day is one day too late to get room rent from a reporter; two girls who had lived in his home town and whom he had taken—together—to a matinée on passes from a friendly press agent—the show wasn't paying—on his day off; and a pretty little waitress whom he smiled at and whom he wished he knew, on days he was lonesome. He had spoken, occasionally, to the women writers in the Sunday department, but, not knowing what a devilish future he was to carve out for himself, but knowing—to a penny—his salary, they had not displayed an interest to warrant more than a pleasant "good afternoon" when he passed them in the halls.

Artie had been singularly untouched by women, by the whole world, in fact. He watched people, in restaurants, on the streets. In his room he read all of the editions of all of the newspapers, all of the magazines he could get hold of, books from the public library, everything. He was a dreamy, slow, shy, believing sort. But good-looking.

On fifteen a week, in some unbelievable way, Artie had saved a little—his mother sent him five dollars occasionally, that she saved from household money—so, when he was fired, he had enough money to get to New York. He knew a few men there who had been on the *Tribune* with him.

He tried to get on the papers in New York and wrote a few stories, on space, for the *Telegraph*. Then Kellogg, who had been on the *Daily News*, an evening paper, in Chicago, told him about a magazine job, a sort of sub-editorship. He applied for it, got it and didn't recover from his surprise or believe it could be true for weeks after he found his salary was to be thirty-five dollars a week. He hardly knew what to do with his money.

His work was easy. The magazine was a small weekly and he did rewriting, copy reading, writing heads for small articles and reading manuscripts. He liked it, thought it was a snap, and worked hard. At night he went to the theater, sitting in the gallery as often as not, and then walked down Broadway or ate a sandwich before going home. He didn't meet many people the first few months, but he was used to not knowing people. It never occurred to him that he could talk to one of the pretty, painted girls that he passed. If he had thought of it, he would have realized that he could, of course, but he was funny about girls. He liked to think nice thoughts about them and preferred being introduced and talking about simple, homey things.

Six months of New York and he began to know people. He liked them as he always liked people. He still couldn't believe his good fortune about his job. He was getting forty a week now and was sending a little to his mother or buying her things—things from Fifth Avenue stores that she didn't need and that weren't quite suitable, but that she was very grateful for.

Artie grew pleased when writers and artists, whom he met at the office, noticed him and invited him to teas and dinners. A single man, especially a good-looking one, is always in demand. Artie danced with pretty girls he met and took them to the theaters once in a while and to teas and he went to see them and liked them, though he thought it was too bad that so many of them had to support themselves. As for indiscretions—he would have blushed if you had hinted that he might have kissed one of them.

Then he met the Carlsens. Herman Carlsen was big, successful, conceited—and very tired of his wife. He had married Nina in the days before a Carlsen picture meant anything at all, but when selling a Carlsen magazine illustration or poster meant a great deal. Nina and Carlsen had come from the same town and Nina had belonged to a better family, but it had taken only a few years in New York to show Carlsen the value of small town social positions. He was having affairs with sev-

eral women at a time, usually, and spoke largely of free life and independence. When Artie met the Carlsens, Herman Carlsen had just met and fallen in love with—rather seriously for him—Lulu Emerson. Mrs. Emerson, beautiful in black, realized the value of the marriage bond. She refused to listen to Carlsen's love-making, which made him, for the first time, swift in pursuit. Usually, women met him three-quarters of the way and weren't exactly frightened doves the remaining quarter part of the journey.

Nina Carlsen was quite stupid, quite puzzled about her relations with life and quite silly.

The small town she had been brought up in had been a narrow one and she had gone to silly little parties and had done thousands of conventional, giggly things until her marriage. She thought in smoothly sandpapered grooves. During the first few years of her marriage she had been happy. She had tried to believe that her marriage was successful and had chirped and fluttered and giggled.

Then Herman Carlsen's affairs and his talks of life and love had begun to puzzle and hurt her. She didn't know what to do. To attempt conventionality and giggles in studios full of artists who were Living Their Own Lives resulted in quiet smiles, unnecessary talk. And even that was unconventional. Nina still loved her husband in the way that most stupid women love their husbands. She had married him with the intention of living with him and being a good, dutiful wife as long as they both lived, and she intended doing it, for she had heard that, in the end, that always brought contentment. And here she was, being laughed at for her virtue, neglected for her goodness and sneered at for her affection.

So, when Nina met Artie Duncan, and saw how handsome and blond and good-natured he was, she determined to have an affair with him—to show people what she could do—and—maybe, even, make Carlsen jealous and bring him back to her. If you can make your husband jealous, Nina had always heard, he'll come back to you.

Artie had never had an affair with a married woman, of course. He had an idea that marriage was a permanent, sacred something that fenced married couples off from the rest of the world. He always spoke to married women as if they were past fifty. Artie had never had any kind of an affair. He was as virginal as he had been at sixteen. He believed in falling in love and getting married and that, after folks were married they ought to settle down, comfortably, and visit with other married folks. He rather disapproved of New York's cynical attitude, though he had sold to a magazine some startling epigrams about marriage which he didn't in the least believe.

Artie didn't care so very much for Nina Carlsen, but he thought her pretty and amusing and nice. He was almost frightened when she started being nice to him. He liked her home, the studio with its painty smell and its colors, Nina's own little cushiony, gray-enamelled living room, and the big, panelled dining room, where Nina loved to have company, so she wouldn't have to eat so many meals alone.

So Artie went to teas at the Carlsens and to dinners—even when he knew quite well that Carlsen wouldn't be there and that he shouldn't have gone. And Nina telephoned him frequently—sometimes at the office, when he wished she wouldn't—and she introduced him to an editor who bought his first fiction story—and she took him to musicales and parties. Nina loved having someone to take her places, someone who didn't laugh at her theories of life, who didn't think her too conventional or stupid. She even persuaded herself that she was having an affair with Artie and felt quite mischievous over it and squeezed his hand as she told him goodbye.

Artie felt sorry for Nina, saw how Carlsen treated her and saw her vain little attempts to fit into a life that was puzzling to her. He didn't mind her giggles and of course he liked her at-

tentions. He didn't know many women and his reading had not led him to expect much from them.

Carlsen first viewed the affair with a cynical smile. Then, as Lulu Emerson became more and more attractive—and elusive—he saw things in a different light—and chuckled. Of course he held slender, blond Artie Duncan in great contempt. But as for Nina, it was as good a way as any to get rid of her—better than any. He had let her find out about his affairs, hoping for freedom and had been met with—tears.

One night, Nina, blue and unhappy at Carlsen's neglect, and very grateful to Artie, threw her arms around his neck and kissed him. Artie didn't like it—it worried him—it wasn't at all the right thing to do. But he didn't want to hurt Nina's feelings, either, so he stayed away for a week or so. A note, asking him to tea, brought him back again. Then there were a lot of other teas and dinners.

And then—suddenly—the awful affair of the divorce court. There was to be a fancy dress ball in Greenwich Village, one of those affairs where the only object of the costumes seems to be to see how little actual covering will be allowed on the floor—and the combining of two uncombinable colors. Nina had telephoned Artie to have dinner with her *en costume*. He was to be a Greek shepherd boy and she a shepherdess. She had had the costumes made by a friend of hers who went in for such things and had arranged for Artie to put on his costume at her house. Which he did—before dinner.

And at dinner, Nina made love to him, in her usual silly way. She told him how lonely she was—and then she asked him to kiss her. It might have been the shepherd's costume—for he did, and then Carlsen came in with someone who turned out to be a detective, and then some other people appeared—the evening was always one awful gray blur to Artie. But, anyhow, there was no Village Ball for them, that night, at any rate, and later there was—the divorce—and many questions, with the answers twisted. Artie and Nina both tried to explain to Carlsen—and to anyone who would listen to them—that there had been nothing to the affair but seven handclasps and three kisses—and were properly laughed at for their trouble. Hadn't they been together everywhere for months? Hadn't they been seen constantly at teas, at parties and at Nina's home? Didn't Carlsen—and Nina, too, lately, talk of free life, of doing what one wanted to do—of independence of thought—and action—and soul? Why be so silly about it?

Artie, with such a start as this, didn't help his reputation, when, after the whole ugly affair, he threw Nina over. No one expected that, even in a circle of independent thinkers. If you love a woman, and she gets divorced on account of you—you're expected to prove—for a little while, at least, the triumph of your love.

The truth is, Artie didn't throw Nina over at all. He had grown tired of her a long time before the divorce but he had continued going to see her because she had telephone him and written to him and he had a kind heart and didn't want to hurt her. But she did bore him. Afterwards, she became unbearable. But he asked her to marry him because he thought he had ruined her life, and if it hadn't been that Carlsen had given Nina some money—and laughed at her lover and her—she might have accepted him. But she felt that, maybe, if she sent Artie away, Carlsen might come back. She couldn't quite understand how he was willing to lose her altogether. Then, as soon as it could be done decently, Mrs. Emerson advocated a second marriage and Carlsen married her. Then Nina felt desperate. She didn't know what to do. When Albert Lewis, heavy, stupid, rich, a patron of art as he knew it, met her at what he thought was a gay Bohemian party and was impressed with her past and her giggles, she made the most of it and married him as soon as she could.

So Artie was branded.

He got away from people as much

as he could and went to the theater alone and took walks on odd streets. He noticed, with surprise, that women paid more attention to him than ever. He thought that they ought to hate and shun him—for—as far as they knew—hadn't he broken up a home? But they flattered him and petted him and it was soothing; though, for a while, he liked being alone.

Then came the St. Clair affair. You can't be expected to believe that Artie was innocent this time. Though the truth is—

Artie met Paula when he went to get a magazine story on how long it takes chorus girls to change their costumes. "Can you dress as fast as a chorus girl?" and that sort of thing. Paula was pretty—and unmarried. And clever and cute. And Artie came as near as he ever had come to falling in love. Perhaps he did fall in love with Paula. He had never met a chorus girl before and there is a fascination about them. Paula gave Artie her name and telephone number and one lonely afternoon he telephoned her. After that he'd meet her near the stage entrance and take her to dinner, with a little blue make-up still clinging to her eyes. They got quite chummy and he even kissed her occasionally, when he took her home. After having kissed a woman once, he found it not at all hard to do. He spent all of the salary that had seemed so big to him and even got up enough courage to ask for a raise. He got it, too—five dollars more a week—nearly the price of an hour after the theater with Paula.

Then he asked Paula to marry him. He had meant matrimony all the time, of course. Can you imagine anyone believing that? But Paula knew his salary and thought she knew how far he could rise and it wasn't nearly far enough, so she closed her black eyes and told him he might kiss her, but that, really, she didn't care a thing about getting married just then. But Paula liked Artie quite a lot. It was very comfortable, always having a big, good-looking man who didn't get fresh, waiting to take you to supper after the show.

Paula didn't stop accepting other invitations. She explained to Artie that it would be simply terrible if she saw him every night. People would talk, you know.

Paula wanted to get away from home. Another girl in the company did too, so they found a little apartment, half an hour's taxi ride nearer downtown than Harlem, and she let Artie pay as much toward it as he wanted to, which meant as much as he could afford. Perhaps he didn't get full value for the money, but he still believed that, if he kept on being kind to her, she'd marry him.

But, somehow, the news of the flat, as it was supposed to be run, got out. Paula didn't like it. She pointed out to Artie that, with his reputation, he simply couldn't see her again. So he didn't, though he wrote to her—three letters, each containing a proposal of marriage.

But Paula had had different plans all the time. So, when she met Crayton with a million or so—oh, horribly newly rich but learning how to spend money better every night—and he offered a really good apartment, she wrote Artie a little note, refusing his kind offer, and flew to Crayton. Artie didn't even try to see Paula again.

Artie was broken up about this for six months or so. His "affair with a chorus girl" had got out, but he knew better now than to offer his version of it. So he smiled and his friends thought the worst and the women he knew were kinder to him than ever. He stayed at home a lot and then it was he began to put in his evenings writing cynical stories that his friends said he could have learned only through real experiences.

He sold some of the stories for pretty fair prices and people met him and told him about seeing them in print and began predicting a future for him and making engagements for dinner. So he started going places again and it pleased people to be seen with him. For his age, they felt, he was getting pretty well

known, considering the handicap of a small salary.

So Artie went back to teas and dinners and people. And, because he was young, he liked to go places and meet people and be friendly and cheerful.

And then, proving beyond the last improbable doubt that Artie was a devil, came the Pressington affair—out of a clear sky. No one knew a thing about it—oh, he was a sly one!—until the news was out. Artie had eloped with a married woman! He had broken up another home! The old stories were brought back and others hinted at. And this last one! If Artie had dared to hint that he was as surprised as anyone else!

Alice Pressington was a sweet-voiced, mousie-haired, gentle little woman, and Pressington was really quite cruel to her. She had Big Dreams about nothing at all and she wanted someone to love and make a fuss over and her little girl was not quite enough—and Pressington never came home. Artie met her at a party and because they were both gentle and rather simple-minded, they seemed drawn together from the first.

This time Artie was wrong, of course. He shouldn't have even talked to Alice. He ought to have known enough to stay away. But he was lonely a lot of the time and marriage, as a permanent and sacred arrangement, had lost some of its significance for him. He liked the peace that Alice brought to him. Alice had a great capacity for being good to people. Pressington was really brutal. Alice told Artie about it and he was really sorry and told her if Pressington got mean again to leave him—he'd look out for her.

Pressington drank more than was really necessary and one night he did get ugly and Alice packed up a few things and went to where Artie lived—which wasn't exactly what he had meant. She brought little Margery with her. By that time Artie knew a few things about the world, and conventions didn't bother him a great deal, so he made his guests as comfortable as he could. The next day he tried to get Alice to go back and avoid a scandal—for even little Margery wouldn't help that. But it was too late, the next day. The scandal was made.

Pressington wouldn't get a divorce and he saw to it that Alice couldn't get one at first. Later she didn't care so much about it. Pressington spends his time cultivating an even larger appetite for his favorite drink and talking about the man who broke up his home.

III

So Artie and Alice—and little Margery, who is growing up to be a very pretty child—are housekeeping in a studio apartment that doesn't require a marriage license pasted in the kitchen window. Alice cooks and keeps house and helps typewrite Artie's stories and she has even developed a talent for making some hand-made things, blouses or book-shelves.

Artie is awfully fond of Margery, and, while perhaps he isn't madly in love with Alice, he never thinks much about it one way or the other. You see, she was really the first woman he had ever known well and he appreciates her good qualities. They live quietly, with guests in to dinner now and then and they read a lot and go to the theater—do gentle, peaceful things.

Artie's friends are looking for other wild Pagan outbursts from him, other homes destroyed, other reputations ruined. But Artie and Alice have it all figured out, in a little red-covered notebook, that if he keeps on selling stories and she keeps on being economical, they can buy a little cottage—oh, nothing grand you know, just a little thing—on Long Island, in just about four years. The air there will be awfully good for Margery.

THE JAILOR

By Helen Woljeska

SHE sat on the starlit terrace. Below, the ocean throbbed, passionately agitated, deeply purple. Above, the sky spread an infinite silver-dotted expanse of midnight blue.

"Like a painting by Maxfield Parrish," she thought; and—"Like my love for Glenn! Yes, passionate, troubled, infinite—like my love for Glenn! The restlessness of the body, and the sadness of the soul . . ."

She crumpled the letter in her hand.

"Our poor love! Destined forever to slink, and hide, and dissemble—living on stolen half-hours and furtive looks and unsigned messages . . ."

She bowed her head and hid her streaming eyes. Alone on this night of love! With the roses breathing amorously, and the stars smiling mysteriously, and the ocean raving in passionate frenzy! Alone! Alone!

But the fingers still crushed the letter . . . Why not accept what it offered? Why not throw everything to the winds? Why not let love triumph? Why not—why not—what else counts?

For a moment she played with the wild and wonderful thought as a child plays with a jewel which he knows is not for him . . . Then she sighed.

What strange and glorious things would we all do, if there were no tomorrow . . .

Tomorrow is humanity's jailor.

THE STARS IN PAWN

By Charles Divine

THOSE gems, the stars of summer night,
Some reckless god hung up to pawn
In Heaven, when his purse was light,
To tide him over 'til the dawn,
While, riotous, he came to earth
To wander, singing, up and down
The winding streets, and in his mirth
He lost the tickets in the town.

IT'S absurd to talk about "popular prices." No prices are popular.

THE MORALS OF THE MORMONS

By Louis Sherwin

I

"I BELIEVE in immorality, but I don't hold with polygamy," said an actor noted as a wag, apropos of a very silly play about Salt Lake City that ran its arduous course a few seasons ago. I quote his remark because it was the first anti-Mormon speech I had ever heard that put the case honestly and without hypocrisy. For the one lesson to be learned from the morals of Salt Lake City is that polygamy and immorality are quite incompatible. The man with five wives behaves himself with exemplary propriety. It is the man with only one who spends all his spare hours looking for the five he has not.

The truth about Salt Lake City has seldom been told. It is, as I shall show, that the morals of the Mormons are vastly superior to those of the people who make a profession and pastime of attacking them—that practically all the scandals that have burst in Utah were among the latter. The first of these that I encountered was in full bloom when I was a tenderfoot in Salt Lake. Arthur Brown, a former United States Senator, a carpetbagging politician from the Presbyterian Middle West, was arrested on a charge of adultery with a certain Mrs. X. I remember seeing Mrs. Brown in the police court, a vindictive, leathern-faced virago. She had been governess to the children of Arthur Brown's first wife, had stolen Brown from Mrs. Brown Number One and brought him to Utah after the divorce. Then she learned and never got over the fact that stealing a man from his wife is quite a different matter from keeping him stolen. Mrs. X. subsequently killed the ex-Senator in the lobby of the Washington Hotel because he had refused to marry her after his second divorce and legitimize her child. Mrs. Brown Number Two died, of a broken heart, 'twas said. Not one of these people were Mormons!

There is no town in America concerning which more nonsense has been written and shouted than poor Salt Lake City. Not even New York. Its inhabitants have been attacked from every possible variety of motive. Sectarian bigotry, pharisaism, political chicanery, even sheer blackmail, the malice of the apostate, and the needs of the hired smuthound have all contributed to the bouillabaisse of flubdub that has been poured out upon the hapless state of Utah,—hapless and defenceless since it has no more sense of humor than the rest of America.

Because a few fanatical yokels have openly taken unto themselves harems declaring that it was the will of God, Salt Lake City has been described as the seat of "a moral menace and a threat to the whiteness of womanhood." Really, this statement was made in all seriousness. The whiteness of my female relations in New York threatened because a couple of hundred dowdy old citizens indulge their polygamous instincts *coram publico* in the name of religion instead of doing it surreptitiously in the name of joy!

Nearly everybody who goes to Utah for the first time has his head stuffed with atrocious tales. To this day there are several persons in America whose sole means of earning a livelihood is to travel around the country telling seduc-

tively dark and horrible stories of innocent virgins dragged into polygamy by the hair of their heads, of weeping wives and the awful fate that befalls the children of plural marriages. Now, of course this is a fascinating picture, a dainty dish to set before King Demos, just the sort of dish he likes. The only unfortunate thing about it, O Best Beloved, is that it is all moonshine, *blague, sciocceria, reiner Unsinn!* Let me explain the Mormons as I found them in their own lairs.

But before I go any further, let me hasten to forestall the inevitable accusations of prejudice by adding that I do not happen to be a Mormon. That, however, is a mere accident of birth. Neither have I any close Mormon friends. Socially, I found most of them uncongenial because their habits are too puritanical. But I have lived among them, worked among them—worked, as a matter of fact, on the Salt Lake *Tribune,* which is famous as the principal anti-Mormon newspaper. The truth is that I found the Mormons so superior in honesty, truthfulness, sobriety and thrift to the rabble of thick-skulled bigots, spiteful apostles and political carpet-baggers who have persecuted them that the comparison is really ludicrous. The propaganda against them is hopelessly tainted with the evil motives of either political dishonesty or bigotry. The Mormons are not only more prosperous and more contented—there are no slums in Salt Lake City—but better behaved than their neighbors. They have, to be sure, the un-American fault of minding their own business. But their wives, judging not only by what they say themselves, but by the records of the divorce courts, are more contented than those of the Gentiles.

II

I AM not betraying any cabinet secrets obtained as a reporter on the *Tribune.* I have no confidences to violate. What I observed can be observed by any man whose eyes are not sealed by preconceived judgments or religious prejudice. What I am going to tell is common knowledge in the town to Mormon and Gentile alike. (Whenever the word Gentile is used here it means a person who does not belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, as they call themselves with their delightful naiveté.) But the truth about Mormonism seldom or never escapes from Utah. Thanks to the stupidity of the hysterical sisterhoods, the people of America have been fed on a potpourri of lurid rumble-bumble on a par with the police gazette fiction that a few years ago was ladled out in the guise of White Slave Traffic investigations. The only really intelligent accounts of this curious corner of America are Murray Schick's "Mormon and Mammon"—which was published in a periodical that has since perished—and "The Latter Day Saints" by Ruth and Reginald Wright Kauffman, which was published in London.

I have been in the midst of the crowd whose business it was to stir up this disingenuous agitation. I know the motives of the whole camarilla: of the erudite millionnaire miner and newspaper owner who became the angel of the agitation because they would not let him return to the Senate and convulse that august body by alluding to the poor Filipinos as "Filliponies"; of the other politician, a renegade Mormon who was discredited by his own people and forced to earn his livelihood by attacking them; of the hired investigator and press agent who kept the turmoil alive because he too, thought he had to live, in spite of what Voltaire said to the contrary; of the flannel-mouthed Protestant bonzes to whom the pastime of baiting Mormons was also the only means of concealing their flagrant intellectual ineptitude from even the most patient congregations.

The first glimmer of insight I had into this question of Mormon vs. Gentile morals came to me in rather amusing fashion. I went to Salt Lake City, with pretty much the same legends in my head that every tenderfoot took with him. For several days I observed with

curiosity and amazement a chemist's shop on one of the most crowded corners of the town. In this shop was what purported to be a soda fountain, but was actually a bar for school girls. Of course the young virgins would never have dared to patronize the back rooms of saloons. At that date—fourteen years ago—it was not considered respectable in Salt Lake City for them even to be seen in the restaurant where drinks were served. But a *jeune fille* sipping a highball at a soda fountain apparently was a more respectable figure than a *jeune fille* sipping a highball in a café—probably because the whiskey at the soda fountain was so much worse.

To me, fresh from England, it was a most interesting spectacle. Here were the daughters of the bourgeoisie sitting up on stools like cocottes at the bar of the Empire Theatre in London. It is hardly necessary to add that the inevitable happened. The ubiquitous drummer was almost as conspicuous at this bar as the bartenders. There was nothing rowdy about the place, but anybody can imagine what the influence of such surroundings was on schoolgirls. I took it for granted that this was a symptom of the famous Mormon wickedness I had heard about. One day I said as much to an acquaintance.

"Bless your simple heart, no," he said scornfully. "Them ain't no Mormon girls. The Mormons ain't allowed to drink no liquor."

"What? Go on! Why, that's just like the Methodists."

"Sure. Ain't you never heard o' the Word of Wisdom?"

Then I learned that the Word of Wisdom forbade the Latter Day Saints not only alcohol, but tea, coffee, and tobacco. So I began to wonder about the truth of the legends I had been filled up on.

The sequel to this drug-store episode was still more illuminating. One afternoon a couple of young Mormon girls visited the famous soda fountain with some Gentile schoolmates, and acquired there an exaltation that had nothing whatever to do with religious frenzy, similar though its manifestations were. Then the Mormon members of the city council arose indignantly and said unkind things about the drug store. Nobody had said a word about it before, although the thing was well known and the saloon keepers had protested and demanded that the druggist cease debauching the innocent maidens of the town, or at least be compelled to pay as much for his license as a saloon keeper.

Subsequently I learned a few more facts about the Mormons. That the social evil—as we euphemistically call it to flatter our precious sensibilities—did not exist in Salt Lake City until the Gentiles came there in sufficient numbers to make it profitable. That the saloonkeepers were all Gentiles. That of the people arrested in Utah only one-eighth were Mormons. That for thrift and industry they were exemplary. That even in the days when polygamy was practiced openly, only ten per cent. of the Mormons indulged in it. That the divorce cases which cluttered up the court calendars were brought by Gentiles, as a Mormon was then the rarest of *rarae aves* in any law court, most of all the divorce court. That in the days when other frontier towns were never free from disorder, Salt Lake City was kept quiet, not by sheriffs or marshals, but by texts. Brigham Young, one of the few great administrators this land of glistening mediocrities has seen, handed down the advice to his successors that he had found a passage from the Scriptures more effective than a platoon of police.

III

WHILE we are on this subject of polygamy let us understand it rationally and not sentimentally. Polygamy is dying today for purely economic reasons. Of course a few of the more prosperous brethren are still taking plural wives, just as their more prosperous Gentile fellow citizens are taking mistresses. But such cases are purely sporadic. A plurality of wives today is a luxury. The Salt Lake *Tribune* a few years ago

professed to know of 224 polygamous marriages that had taken place since the compact with the Federal Government by which Utah was admitted to statehood. Now, admitting that this may be true, there are between 400,000 and 500,000 Mormons in those parts. In how many other communities of 400,000 people could you find as few as 224, or even 2,240, men who had taken mistresses?

This polygamy question is undoubtedly settling itself. Just as economic conditions are killing it, so economic conditions, and not profligacy alone, created it. Brigham Young said to Senator Trumbull years ago: "Polygamy was adopted by us as a necessity after we came here." Any intelligent man will see at once that it stands to reason, in view of the struggle for existence the Mormon pioneers had to face. The fertile Salt Lake Valley that you see from the back of the observation car today was once a bleak, sage brush and alkali desert. The more robust wives and children a man had, the more land he could cultivate. Hired labor was prohibitively expensive. The cheapest thing to do was to marry it and breed it. For, naturally, Mormonism was recruited mainly from the peasant classes of Europe. The religion appealed chiefly to the most illiterate. Far be it from me to discuss the question whether it was invented by a drunken Baptist clergyman from a novel written by a drunken Presbyterian clergyman. You will find an abundance of weary theological discussions about it, embalmed in numerous books which who runs may read. Burton, the greatest genius of his type since Ulysses returned to Penelope, who knew men and cities under every sky, describes Mormonism as an eclectic mixture of Semitic Monotheism, Persian Dualism, and the triads and trinities of the Egyptians and Hindus, combined with flavorings of Freemasonry, Methodism, Swedenborgianism and Transcendentalism. I have also detected traces of Aztec mythology. To me it has always suggested a collaboration between Moses, St. Paul and Rider Haggard. It appealed, therefore chiefly to European hinds whose wives took manual labor in the fields as a matter of course.

Now, talking about wives, let us for a moment consider the ingenuous superstition that a plural wife must necessarily be miserable. It is based on the lusty and, I suppose, imperishable myth that jealousy is a feminine characteristic. I used to cherish it myself until one day a clever woman could no longer restrain her impatience at my stupidity.

"How fatuous you men are to believe that women are jealous!" she exclaimed. "Not one in 500 know what jealousy really feels like. Can't you see through the bluff?"

"Why, no, I can't," said I, "how do you account for the fury of a woman whose husband is taken away from her?"

"Because if you take away a woman's husband you take away her livelihood, stupid!"

"But why all the gestures of jealousy?" I asked again.

"Because men expect it of them," she replied: "It flatters a man to think that the woman he loves can not bear to share him with another woman. But any woman of sense would rather have a third share in a first-rate man than the undivided love of a third-rater."

Not the least curious thing about this conversation is that it took place before the publication of Bernard Shaw's preface to "Getting Married." Therein he says: "The woman whose instincts are maternal, who desires superior children more than anything else, never hesitates. She would take a thousandth share, if necessary, in a husband who was a man in a thousand, rather than have some comparatively weedy weakling all to herself."

I have met several plural wives. So far from being the Latter Day Martyrs pictured by the uplift magazines they were as cheery souls as I ever met in dowdy clothing. And they were just about as ashamed of their status as a man is of a raise in salary. Julian Street has told of his meeting one of

the Mrs. Joseph F. Smiths, whom he describes as a comfortable, cheerful, motherly soul. Mr. Street asked the Prophet, Seer and Revelator, how many children and grandchildren he had.

"Let me see," said the Prophet, "over a hundred, I should say."

"Oh, more than that," protested Mrs. Smith eagerly: "why, I'm the mother of eleven and I have had 32 grandchildren in the last twelve years."

"Surely you have 110, father," urged one of the sons, proudly."

"Perhaps, perhaps," replied the Prophet, stroking his long gray beard with a benign smile.

"I beat you, though!" exclaimed C. W. Penrose, one of the presidency of the church and editor of the *Deseret Evening News*, beaming proudly.

"I don't know about that," argued young Smith. "If Father would count up I think you'd find he was ahead."

"How many have you?" asked the prophet turning to Penrose.

"One hundred and twenty odd," replied Penrose, the veins in his lean, New-England-deacon face almost bursting with self-satisfaction.

"Well, you may be ahead now, but give us time, give us time," said Mrs. Smith.

I visited the house of a polygamist one afternoon and saw a large photograph on the wall showing a group of men in convicts' striped clothes. Being short-sighted I crossed the room to look at it closely. To my intense embarrassment I observed that the features of the most prominent figure in the group resembled those of my host. But there was no embarrassment about my hostess.

"I see you're looking at that photograph," she said kindly.

"Why er—yes—hhrumph—ahem," I stuttered, feeling as sad an ass as William Jennings Bryan ought to feel.

"Why that's the first bunch of 'cohabs' that went to the Pen. and there"—pointing to the central figure—"is Mr. M—" Mr. M.— being the host. Her pride was unsurpassed by that of an early Christian martyr. By "cohabs" she meant men guilty of unlawful cohabitation.

Madeleine Zabriskie Doty tells of a plural wife whom she rather unwillingly perceived to be quite contented with her lot. She evidently expected to find her an exception and asked:

"Now tell me candidly, aren't there plural wives who are unhappy?"

"Of course there are," replied the Mormon woman: "aren't there single wives who are unhappy?"

The answer to her question is to be found in the records of any divorce court.

IV

Now, I am not making any special plea for polygamy. As an institution it simply won't work any more. I am simply representing the facts because the picture of Salt Lake life that has been drawn from distorted half truths is too preposterous. Here are some more actualities to be considered:

1. I never yet saw the child of a polygamist that was not a lusty creature, bursting with health. Ill-favored, shark-mouthed, pig-eared farmers as were the old-time Mormons (vide Kipling's description of them), the younger generation is remarkable for its high percentage of comely youths and maidens.

2. A polygamous Mormon always supports his wives and children. A Gentile may have as many unpaid mistresses as he can persuade and leave their children to charity.

3. The plural wives who have sued for a divorce are very few.

Polygamy, however, is now a dying issue. It is revived from time to time by the attacks that are periodically made upon the church. Senator Kearns and the *Tribune* did more to encourage polygamy by attacking the Mormons than a regiment of Apostles equipped with a library of revelations. After the Senate inquiry into the Smoot case several people were driven into plural marriages solely through the religious ecstasy superinduced by phantoms of persecution.

The conditions that made polygamy profitable once upon a time no longer exist. Salt Lake City today is the most cosmopolitan city of its size in America. Wives, today, are liabilities rather than assets, just as they are in Philadelphia or Joplin, Mo. So it is none too easy for the young Mormon to support one wife, let alone six, although the Church strives to maintain its cardinal principle of encouraging its members to marry early if not often.

At any rate, you can see the absurdity of such hectic visions as that of the late Alfred Henry Lewis, who never allowed facts to interfere with his conviction. He wrote a piece about Mormonism called "The Viper's Trail." In all seriousness he drew a picture of a Mormon Empire overrunning the entire United States with polygamy and levying tithes from San Diego to Salem. As Murray Schick pointed out, this vision is on a par with the amateur poultry raiser's estimate of a world overrun with chickens. The fact is that the younger generation of Mormons are to a large extent Mormons simply in name. All of them are supposed to contribute a tenth of their income as tithes. Thousands of them never pay their tithes at all. And the bishops loudly complain in the Tabernacle that still more of the brethren are guilty of "holding out on the Lord" by interpreting ten per cent. in their own peculiar way.

Personally I found the Mormons, for the most part dull, dowdy, provincial, santimonious and full of pious cant. On the other hand they practice their piety to the extent of being honest, frugal and sober. An instance of their honesty is worth repeating. A Mormon and a Gentile had taken up a piece of land in partnership, and had agreed to record the deed in the names of both. After a while the Gentile discovered that the Mormon had recorded it in his own name. He complained to the Mormon's bishop. (The Saints endeavor to avoid litigation among themselves by arbitrating all such disputes before informal ecclesiastical courts. The results are said to be on the whole satisfactory, saving time and expense.) The Bishop decided in favor of the Gentile. The Mormon appealed to higher church authorities, who upheld the Bishop. The Mormon was obstinate, however, so the Bishop excommunicated him with these words: "Legally you have the power to retain the property and we have no right to interfere. But, morally, to retain it is theft. As an individual you are committing a dishonest act and for it you are barred from the church communion." This excommunicate has since become a loud-mouthed accession to the anti-Mormon propaganda.

V

The fantastic politics of Utah are inextricably mixed up with the history of its morals. The Mormons, you see, have always been a clannish lot. They settled a barren wilderness. They turned sage brush deserts into corn and alfalfa fields. They made peach trees flourish where nothing more useful than the juniper or cotton tree used to grow. And they have the peculiar idea that they themselves should be the chief beneficiaries of their own and their fathers' industry. They look upon the Gentiles as interlopers and carpetbaggers, as I am afraid only too many of them are. At least two former United States Senators can be so described with complete accuracy.

For many years Gentile merchants experienced much difficulty in getting the Mormon trade, still greater difficulty in obtaining political offices. They could not do anything about it, as they were for a long time outnumbered. It was useless to whine about this to the rest of the country. Presbyterians in Salt Lake City could not expect much sympathy from Presbyterians in Indiana, say, on the ground that Mormons preferred to deal with Mormon stores and vote for Mormon sheriffs. The Indiana Presbyterians would have replied that they had troubles of their own, since Methodists have a way of buying groceries from Methodists, and

Baptists from Baptist grocers the world over, wherever their dreary creeds are found. So in their impotent fury the Salt Lake Gentiles dug up the old animosity and the old charge—polygamy. As I said before, never at any time were more than ten per cent. of the Mormon population polygamists. And they never hurt the Gentiles, never attempted to seduce Gentile maidens into plural marriages. Nevertheless the Gentile peddlers lifted up their voices and howled to the rest of the country: "These wicked people are polygamists—come over and save your Christian brethren from their clutches."

The Church consequently became a target for blackmail by the big political parties. It is an ugly word but it is literally true. Whenever the party treasury needed money—and that was nearly always—a more or less suave envoy was sent to Salt Lake City to explain to the heads of the Church that from all over the country pressure was being brought to bear on Washington to have Utah reduced to the rank of a territory again in order that Federal officers from Washington might be sent out to suppress polygamy. But, of course, if the Church, which was notoriously rich, cared to contribute to the party's funds the party would be enabled to counteract this pressure and so forth. And the Church had a vivid recollection of the dark days of 1884, when a fire-eater named Zane from Illinois was made Chief Justice of the territory. He took with him an army of United States marshals who began scouring the territory for "cohabs" as they were called. "Cohab-hunting" became the sport of the hour. It was a pretty sight. I commend the history of this period to the attention of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, which has always contributed so freely to the anti-Mormon propaganda. "All the Gentiles in Utah aided in the sport. Women and children, bankers, merchants, reporters and all the Christian clergymen took part." The property of the Church was confiscated. It was proposed to deprive all Mormons of the vote until finally Prophet President Wilford Woodruff issued a famous manifesto ordering the brethren to abstain from polygamy.

In 1894 Utah became a state. But the blackmail, or attempts to blackmail, never ceased. You see, although polygamy was officially abandoned, the old polygamists refused to desert their plural wives and continued to live with them. This was tacitly understood and winked at. Nevertheless it was an instrument for bludgeoning in the hands of the national political parties, who were constantly threatening an amendment to the United States constitution and a revival of the old persecutions. In 1900, the late Mark Hanna sent Perry S. Heath out to Salt Lake City to look over the ground. The State had been Democratic in 1896. It became overwhelmingly Republican in 1900. Thomas Kearns, a miner who at that time was notoriously illiterate, was elected to the Senate. One of Kearns's partners bought the Amelia Palace, which Brigham Young had built for his favorite wife, an expensive white elephant that the Church had long been trying to sell. Kearns bought the *Tribune* and made Perry Heath general manager, a position for which he was as well fitted as I would be to conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The *Tribune's* attacks on the Mormons ceased. It was a beautiful love feast.

Kearns liked Washington very much and thought he was firmly fixed in his comfortable seat in the Senate. But the Church thought otherwise. It considered it had amply fulfilled its part of the bargain by giving him one term. An able man in many respects, his fund of information was confined almost entirely to mining. Utah winced loudly whenever its Senator made one of his amusing breaks in public. He became the national Malaprop.

When he discovered that he had no hopes of re-election he did what the Gentiles have always done in Utah. To put it bluntly, he "flopped," and organized the "American" party along the lines of the old fire-eating "Liberal" party, which had been disbanded when

love feast took place. Frank Cannon, former Mormon, was made editor of the *Tribune*, which revived its Mormon baiting. Cannon had a grievance himself as his career in the Senate had been cut short after one term.

The fight, then, of the "American party," was purely a local squabble for political jobs. But money was spent freely to obtain signatures to petitions from all over the States protesting against the election of Reed Smoot to the Senate. The purity and motherhood of America would be imperilled if this gawky, dowdy and eminently respectable woolen merchant were allowed to take his seat. Well, the attack failed and Smoot sat in the Senate for over ten years and yet I am informed that purity and motherhood are still rampant in many parts of our imperilled commonwealth.

I don't believe and I have never found anybody in Utah who believes that a single soul in that precious "American" party really cared a rap whether a few hundred of their fellow citizens were polygamists. The great majority of Gentiles in Salt Lake City know their Mormon neighbors for quiet, law-abiding persons. At the same time they wanted to see Gentile majorities on the city council and school board. Eventually they did win a city election. Then came the prime joke. Word was sent out to the so-called underworld all over the West that a good time was coming. Salt Lake City was to be an "open town" with all that it implies. Never were there so many scandals of corruption as during that "American" administration. Finally one day an "American" chief of police was caught red-handed sharing in the proceeds of a crime.

I have related this ancient history because, aside from its ironic features, it shows the real sources of this agitation and the motives and characters of the men responsible for it. There is, for instance, the ex-judge, another Gentile carpet bagger who told me he had found such immorality among the school children of Salt Lake City as he had never heard of elsewhere. He claimed to have cross-examined twenty boys and twenty girls from one of the schools and that eighteen of the boys and seventeen of the girls admitted some form of sexual precocity. I asked him whether they were Mormon children and he said, "No, but it is the corrupting influence of the Mormons." Well, this worthy judge one day was himself accused of having mistreated one of his delinquents, an attractive little baggage. After an investigation of this charge and also some alleged financial irregularities he left the town in a hurry.

The scandals about the Mormon baiters could fill an entire magazine. There was the prominent fire-eater, famous for his taste in painting, who after being elected to an important office hired an entire house in the red-light district for his legislative friends. There was the eminent statesman, married to one of the daughters of Salt Lake aristocracy, whom an unmarried lady declared, on the eve of his election, to be the father of her bouncing baby. The natives will know the man I mean.

An inmate of the once flourishing red-light district became suddenly wealthy, came East and managed to obtain a foothold on the New York stage for a while, being able to lend money to one or two of our best known little managers. If the name of the man whom she blackmailed were known, it would make quite a little hurricane in Gentile circles. I still remember vividly this chaste gentleman's pious horror one afternoon when I told him I had just heard Prophet Joseph F. Smith declare in the Tabernacle, crowded with his people at a semi-annual Conference, that if he abandoned the wives he had married he would be ashamed to face his God, or words to that effect. Of the Christian clergymen who have joined in the baiting at least two, to my knowledge, have left the town under a cloud. Another, famous for his assaults on the Demon Rum in his pulpit, assailed the demon in somewhat different fashion at a banquet one night and had to be helped home.

VI

Today Salt Lake City is a very different town from the one I knew twelve years ago. Then it was a place to be avoided, as dull a nest as ever I saw. Two things have changed it: sugar and cabarets. The European war sent the price of sugar stock from $9.00 to $30.00 a share, creating the usual crop of overnight Croesuses. The place now boasts of two quite good hotels, whereas it used to rely upon the savage mercies of the old time "American House" abomination. A letter from a Gentile friend tells me that:

"During the past year or so the community has fallen hard for the grill-and-cabaret route to Hell. One of the leading grills has no entertainers, but is crowded nightly with 'fashionable' revelers (even elders of the Church) who dance and drink deeply of the wine that boils when it is cold. At another house, where the patrons are more cosmopolitan, regular orgies are held nightly. Even the lobby is cleared for tables and hundreds are turned away. They maintain a bunch of entertainers who dance without their Onyx hosiery and are otherwise clad just enough to escape being jailed. Hitherto staid sober citizens have to be assisted to their machines, helplessly drunk. This may sound trivial to one who has seen so much of night life in New York, but it is going some for this one-cylinder burg. Aside from its tendency to undermine morals, my grievance against café-life is that it has been the chief cause of the rapid spread of dry territory.'

Western legislatures, believing that as Oscar Wilde—whom they have never read—says: "Nothing succeeds like excess," cling to the chaste idea of curing one form of intemperance by another. To the huge disgust of the sensible citizen who is thereby prohibited from his modest bottle of Chateau La Rose (Cal.) with his Sunday dinner and the nightly Budweiser stirrup cup among his Lares and Penates.

The Mormons, although the stricter brethren avoid the Demons Rum, Nicotine and Caffeine, have always encouraged dancing. Dances are held regularly at the Ward meeting houses and are opened with prayer. But today even the Word of Wisdom is in the discard as far as the younger generation are concerned. The fact is that most of their well-to-do youngsters are Mormons only in name. As one of them, a colleague on a New York newspaper, expressed it the other day, "they are Mormons, but they aren't working at it." Indeed they are taking to Gentile dissipations more than kindly. When one-third of the people gargling the grape in the cafés are Mormons, when Mormon elders are to be seen by the side of long cold bottles, it is a sure sign that education and fox-trotting are playing hob with the Latter Day Saints. I am told that no less a prelate than the Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the Church has been seen actually playing golf for his health at the Country Club, a place which even pious Gentiles (who could not afford to belong) used to frown upon because women drank cocktails there.

Young maidens of the Salt Lake aristocracy parade Main Street in skirts that, just to be on the safe side of fashion, are a trifle shorter than any chorus girl's along Broadway. Those who have jewels believe like "Fingy" Conners, that the time to wear them is always. Even the yokels from down state who attend the semi-annual conferences in the Tabernacle wear intelligence in their faces and Fifth Avenue (Rochester) clothing on their persons.

In another respect Salt Lake City has become as modern as New York. The red-light district which flourished once with a roaring trade, especially when the legislature was in session, has ceased to exist as a district and become dispersed among the residential neighborhoods.

In short, if I were Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the Latter Day Saints, I would pray for another Diocletian persecution.

Judging from recent symptoms,

nothing else will hold this curious church together. Personally, I think it is a real pity they were not allowed to carry out their interesting experiment without interference. What Burton said in 1859 is true. In the matter not only of morals, but eugenics and economics, their polity had many points of superiority to ours. Today it differs from ours only superficially. Not Gentile persecution, but Gentile friendship is breaking it up.

THE OLD MAID

By Henry Hugh Hunt

EARLY one June morning, Miss Mattie Bogley came down her front steps and began to sweep the already immaculate rose-bordered walk. She was a homely little woman of fifty; dressed in her neat calico gown, her iron-gray hair in a braided plat at the back of her head, she was as prim as her old-fashioned house and garden. The white, waxen blooms of her syringa bushes were not more chaste than she.

She swept the walk with careful little dabs until she reached the gate, when she caught sight of a disgusting object. Upon the flat top of the gate-post lay a perfectly good cigarette! Using her thumb and forefinger as if they were a pair of tongs, she picked up the offensive thing—and carried it swiftly into the house.

In the dim parlor of horse-hair and crochet-work, Miss Mattie found a match, and, with fingers that trembled at the awfulness of the deed, she lit the cigarette, and smoked it to the dizzy end.

"At any rate," she murmured weakly, "it makes the room smell as if there *might* 'a' been a man in it."

YOU

By Muna Lee

VIOLETS grew thick on the hill-side,
Lilacs blossomed in town.
Wet-brown were the fresh ploughed uplands,
And the unpaved streets were wet-brown.

Tanagers sang from the willows,
In the elmtops, sparrows were shrill.
Your arm touched my arm on the wakeful street—
Your lips drank my lips on the hill.

"HELEN, WHERE'S MY SHIRT?"

By Watkins Eppes Wright

I

IT was Sunday morning.

"Helen," John Henry Brown called from the bedroom, "Where's my shirt?"

Helen May Brown, his wife, looked up from the pan of potatoes she was preparing for dinner and sighed.

"In the bottom dresser drawer, to the right, John Henry," she replied.

As she slowly peeled a potato, making the peeling entirely too thick from an economical viewpoint, Helen smiled bitterly. How much longer could she stand it? Her nerves were in a fearful state from always knowing just exactly what was going to happen before it happened: from knowing just what her husband would say even before the words left his lips. Nothing unexpected ever happened. She lived everything twice: first in anticipating it and second in experiencing it. Her life was truly most inconsequential.

Her mind reverted to John Henry's question regarding the shirt. They had been married twenty years. Every Sunday morning for twenty years he had asked that same question and every Sunday morning for twenty years she had answered it in the same manner. His shirts had always rested in the same drawer of the same dresser, and yet John Henry never failed on Sunday morning to ask: "Where's my shirt?"

Helen caught herself figuring how many times that question had been asked. There are fifty-two Sundays in a year; twenty times fifty-two equals one thousand and forty. One thousand and forty times John Henry had asked that question, and one thousand and forty times she had answered it. The event, small as it was, had got on her nerves.

She knew he would ask the question as long as he lived, and as she pictured an endless line of Sundays, each giving birth to the same question, she shuddered. If she lived to be seventy—she was forty-five now—and John Henry lived as long as she did, that would mean twenty-five years more of the same existence. Again she figured. twenty-five times fifty-two equals one thousand and three hundred. Think of it! Living over and over that Sunday morning event for thirteen hundred times!

John Henry entered the kitchen.

Helen merely nodded in answer to his rather indifferent "good morning."

Out of the corner of her eye she watched him. She knew exactly what he would do. He would first pull the little box containing a tin of shoe blacking and a polishing brush from under the sink. He did. He would then spit into the tin box, dip the brush in, and then scrub his unattractive, blunt-toed shoes. He did. He would then go to the sink and wash off his hands as carelessly as a school boy, and wipe them on the roller towel, leaving black finger marks. He did. Then he would turn and say to her: "'Bout ready for church, Helen?" He did.

Helen could have screamed. He had said this same thing to her for twenty years, and for twenty years she had not missed being ready for church when she was able to walk.

John Henry went out on the porch. Helen listened. She heard a scraping sound and then a dull thud. She knew what had happened. John Henry had dragged a chair across the floor and

leaned it back against the wall. He was smoking his corn cob pipe and watching the children and villagers going by to the nine-thirty Sunday school services. Again sighing, Helen placed the potatoes in a pan to soak, and went into her bedroom to prepare for church.

She almost wished she had married a minister, Methodist preferred (they moved so much), and then perhaps she could have looked in another mirror once in a while. This mirror had reflected her so often it seemed as if she should have been photographed upon its surface.

Helen May Brown's room was a part of the house, but not of it. She had patterned it after a design in one of the woman's magazines she took. It was a pretty room, in blue and white. Narrow pieces of blue and white cretonne were hung at the top of the windows and down either side. White sash curtains and shades finished the window dressing. She had coaxed an old dressing stand into new life with several coats of white enamel, and on the old four-poster bed was a "crazy quilt" in which the colors blue and white predominated.

It was in this room that she did most of her thinking: it was her own little world. Others seldom entered it. John Henry had merely glanced in from the doorway on the day of the room's completion. He sniffed and called it "Tommy-rot."

And he had considered it a fad when Helen, with much timidity, expressed the desire for a room of her own. John Henry snored; this was nothing new, for he had snored for twenty years, to Helen's knowledge. But she had not become accustomed to it. Just the reverse; it had got on her nerves. She could not sleep. Nights were horrors.

And so she had fitted up this dainty room. She enjoyed it. It was the one place in which she could dream, and read her favorite authors uninterrupted.

As she dressed, Helen's thoughts drifted about, resting like butterflies, first upon one object and then another. She then began thinking of her daughter. This daughter, an only child, was now in boarding school. She had meant much to Helen, although she had been a rather unemotional and indifferent child, never demonstrative or affectionate. Cold and unresponsive, like her father. But she had been company for Helen.

But now Helen was alone. At times she wished that she had had a large family; had been always able to keep one child at her knee. Raising this child had been a beautiful experience, and Helen felt a keen sense of satisfaction. She knew she had not failed in the matter of motherhood. But now her work seemed done. There seemed nothing else left for her.

The matter of the daughter's education had been the cause of a scene. John Henry had insisted that the schools of Pineville offered advantages enough for any girl. Boarding schools and colleges only educated girls above work and made snobs of them. Look at Virginia Vaughan, the mayor's daughter, he had said, by way of illustration. She had gone away a sweet, friendly girl and returned with her nose tilted at an agle of forty-five degrees.

But Helen was determined. She had been denied a college education herself. She had married John Henry for the sake of her parents; he was the best "catch" in Pineville and in a moment of discouragement, driven by a nagging father and mother, Helen had married him. She was determined that her only daughter should not live the young womanhood that had fallen to her lot.

And so she won out. The daughter was now in her second year. Finishing there, she would go to another distant college, and then probably teach or marry. She was lost to Helen, seeming no longer to need the protection of a mother's wing.

Hearing the first bell for church ringing, Helen hurriedly placed her hat on before the old mirror. It was not an unattractive face that looked out at her. The cheeks were pink; the eyes a soft brown. The good air of Pineville had left her complexion unhardened. Her

cheeks were well-rounded, and her neck was graceful in its contours. But no one knew about her neck. Such a thing as a low gown would create a never-dying sensation in Pineville. Her hair was a shade between titian red and walnut brown, and free from gray. A few gray hairs might be there, but it would take close inspection to find them.

Helen May Brown might even attract attention on Fifth Avenue. Hers was a figure built for tailored suits. Such a suit would have clung to her with all grace and naturalness. Her bearing was regal. It had been the cause of her being called "stuck up" in the parlance of Pineville. And so she carried herself well for all the years of hard work and the routine of drudgery. Time had indeed dealt kindly with her. Her years rested lightly upon her shoulders.

Giving a last look at herself, Helen joined John Henry on the porch.

II

Now, the edifice of the Methodist Episcopal Church South in Pineville was an attractive one. It was the pride of Pineville and the envy of all the surrounding towns. There was not another building like it in the whole country. And this edifice had been made a possibility, a reality, by numerous ice-cream socials, oyster suppers, bazaars, and lawn parties, to say nothing of the "shoe socials." (You multiply the size of your shoe by two, and with the resulting amount in hard cash you walk in. You get in return a piece of cake and a saucer of cream.)

And so all these various modes of separating tight-fisted villagers from their hard-earned cash had gone toward building the handsome church. The same modes of extracting cash were still at work; they were making something else a reality—a pipe organ! Yes, the Methodist Episcopal Church South was having a pipe organ installed. Ninety-five per cent. of the inhabitants were waiting with fierce anticipation for the Sunday this organ was to be heard for the first time. The other five per cent. were not interested—they were deaf!

This pipe organ had been instrumental in giving Pineville other excitement. This came in the shape of Donald Strong, the man who was installing the organ. He was a handsome fellow of perhaps forty-six. He was the mecca for many pairs of eyes and the hero of innumerable day dreams.

Every girl in Pineville had a severe attack of palpitation of the heart when he passed. He drove a little gray roadster. But to most girls this car was a chariot and the driver a god.

Donald Strong was quiet, unassuming, and yet withal he had an air of importance. His eyes were deep-set, gray-blue and seemed sad. Miss Minerva Simpkins (she who sang soprano in the choir and ran to tremolo notes) expressed the sentiments of the village, collectively, when she said:

"His eyes but window a soul troubled—a heart heavy with disappointment, perhaps caused by a faithless woman!"

It is well to say here, by way of explanation, that Miss Minerva Simpkins secretly read Elinor Glyn.

It was exactly five minutes of eleven when Helen May Brown and John Henry Brown walked up the steps of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

And again Helen's mind reverted to figures.

She visualized herself climbing these same steps for the next twenty-five years, which would mean one thousand and three hundred times. They bowed right and left and were ushered to their seats three rows from the front. As Helen sank into the cushion she had placed in the seat she remembered that it was the twelfth one she had made. The other eleven had been worn out. Imagine wearing out eleven cushions in one church! It was fearful; deadly monotonous.

Someone touched her lightly on the arm.

She turned.

She faced Donald Strong. He was offering her half of his book. She took

it and sang with him. John Henry never sang. He always fixed his eyes on a spot just above the minister's head. And when he was sitting his eyes rested on a spot a few feet below it, which happened to be directly between the minister's eyes. If John Henry's look had been a brick, it would have killed the minister.

For once in her life Helen didn't hear a dozen words of the sermon. Her mind was equally divided in absentmindedly trying to dissect the weird figures in the large stained-glass window over the pulpit and in taking sly, almost girlish, peeps at the man by her side. He was of a different world from hers.

She tried to imagine the things he had seen, the places he had been. Think of it! He had no doubt just recently walked up Broadway! And even next Sunday might find him in a city far, far away. He saw the world. No living in one place for twenty years for him. She envied him. She wished she was a man. Anything to break the monotony of her existence.

Helen May Brown usually thought twice, sometimes more often, before doing a thing, but in the twinkling of an eye she had asked Donald Strong to dinner. It was immediately after the benediction. Someone had introduced them, and for some reason he had lingered. He appeared to be interested in her. He looked at her more than once, something that no one in Pineville ever did—they could shut their eyes and come pretty near telling you when Helen blinked!

But Donald Strong looked at her rather long. His deep-set eyes seemed to drink her in. He had a way of making you feel that he was deeply interested in your most trivial remark. When he smiled one corner of his mouth tilted slightly upward, forming a dimple in his cheek. His smile was that of a handsome, interested, but somewhat sad boy.

And so in the twinkle of an eye Helen had asked him to dinner; and in less than the twinkle of an eye Donald had accepted.

III

And such a dinner! Helen became a girl again. She drank in Donald's words like a thirsty bird at a cool fountain. They refreshed her. They took her away on mighty wings and sat her down in another world. She became a part of the wonderful things he described. His descriptive powers enchanted her. She was borne up, up, up—far away from Pineville and its drabness. Her cheeks flushed and her lips, half parted, revealed white, rather large but perfect teeth.

And what of John Henry?

He was listening too, but he was more interested in Helen's pastry that melted in his mouth. He was, after all, only a part of the setting for this meeting. Like the table, the clean, old-fashioned dining-room, and the dinner, John Henry was but furnishing background. Helen and Donald stood out from this background like two flames of vital life. All else faded into insignificance. And what of Donald Strong?

He took in all of Helen's attractiveness—her white teeth, the flushed cheeks, the life and vitality that shone in her soft brown eyes. How strange, he mused, that such a handsome woman should be hidden away in such a drab town, among still more drab people.

Still musing, he mentally clothed Helen in a severe black velvet gown, cut low at the neck, sleeveless. He then placed her in a café behind a mass of palms at a table with rose-colored lights. An orchestra played a dreamy waltz tune. He then sat himself down opposite Helen and placed her two hands in his. He then had her lean toward him, closer—closer—closer. Their lips were about to meet—

"Have some more of Helen's pastry, Mr. Strong."

Donald came back to reality with a dull thud.

John Henry had spoken.

Donald smiled and passed his plate.

He then turned again to Helen.

She bent slightly forward toward him, hanging breathlessly upon his

every word—words that were spoken in a full, deep and not unmusical voice. There was an intangible something drawing them swiftly onward, onward—and to what? This dinner was but a sort of prologue.

And then followed a week of clandestine meetings, each of them like an oasis of color in a vast desert of drabness. Helen May Brown refused to commune with her better self. All her life she had listened to the voice of a too severe conscience, and now she stifled it. She would not let herself think. To Pineville's four thousand people she was but one of the many mothers who had raised a daughter. She was a settled married woman, living the matronhood of her life, sitting back to wait for the end. She was now in the stretch that lies between the springtime of youth and the winter of old age. No one could or would connect anything indiscreet with Helen's name. Her life had been a long path of happiness with her good, easy-going husband! Thus the villagers thought!

But for six evenings Helen had met Donald Strong at the far end of Jones' lane, and had gone to ride with him in his car. These wonderful rides through the country had grown to mean almost life itself.

John Henry stayed at the store until nine o'clock every evening. He ran up at six for his supper and then hurried back to his Brown Mule Tobacco, his red and white candy and cabbage heads. There in the winter he sat behind the big box stove with his cronies, chewing and expectorating in the box of sawdust. In the summer he sat on the store porch, whittling. This devotion to business, this hard-headed refusal to follow the new closing-at-six plan, had made it possible for Helen to meet Donald without fear of discovery on the part of John Henry.

After John Henry had gulped down his last cup of coffee and hurried back to the store, Helen slipped her veil and hat out from the cupboard where she kept them in readiness, and let herself out of the back door.

She hurried down through the garden and with some effort she slid through the place in the fence where two boards were loose. It was then only a short walk to the meeting place.

She sank into the luxurious upholstering with a blissful sigh. Donald smiled upon her happily and they sped away through the early autumn twilight. On and on they sped, over hill, through valley and by picturesque farmhouses.

After leaving the town far behind Donald slowed down to a mere crawl. And this was the time for which Helen lived. For then they talked. Helen's hunger for someone to talk to on the subjects she loved was being appeased.

For years she had had to keep silent when she longed to pour out into words her thoughts on the matters of art, books, even politics. John Henry's part in these outbursts consisted of a mere grunt now and then. Helen might as well have addressed the cow or the lamp-post for all the satisfaction she got out of John Henry.

And so for the past fifteen years she had kept silent when she would have expressed a thought dear to her heart.

Donald understood; he listened; he admired and generally agreed with her on the subjects she loved. He possessed the greatest of all arts: the art of listening. Donald had never made any advances that Helen could resent, but tonight he reached over and laid his hand over hers where it rested upon her knee.

She had never before experienced quite the same sensation as now came over her. What must she do? Must she resent this act and slip her hand from under his? She did neither. Young at heart, naturally demonstrative in her love, Helen let him hold her hand. She was hungry for such little touches of affection. John Henry had almost stopped kissing her. She could scarcely remember when he had made the slightest move that would illustrate his love for her.

And now she sat still, her heart wildly beating, and let Donald Strong press her hand tightly within his warm grasp.

Driving with the other hand, Donald leaned close to Helen and talked. Before he had mostly listened, but now he talked as she had never heard anyone talk before, especially a man. He spoke of a lonely life; of the need of a woman to cheer him, to love him; the desire for a woman who understood. For years he had tried to find such a woman. And then, smiling like an embarrassed boy, he recited her a little poem of his own writing. He had written it, he explained, in a moment of sadness when it looked as if God had made no woman for him.

"God certainly has made her for me:
The woman who'll understand,
Who will come forward to meet me,
Gladly giving her hand.
All around me the friends are mating,
And sadly I watch them depart:
For, dear, I'm so weary of waiting;
Oh, when will you come to my heart?

"I long for the kiss that awaits me,
I long for those lips that smile;
Oh, how dreary the watching hours,
As I look for you all of the while!
So tell me that somewhere, dearest,
Just over the hills' deep blue,
With arms outstretched you beckon me,
Bidding me come to you!"

Helen May Brown listened with wide eyes to this wonderful little poem, doubled in value by the voice of its creator, soft, tender and musical. She was only human, after all, so who would blame her when she found herself in Donald's arms? This man, with his youthful heart and his magnificent, strong body, seemed to be the true-to-life realization of all she wanted. His lips touched hers. Romance had come to her at last, but what must be the cost of the delayed coming? With head buried against Donald's shoulder she heard him say in low tones, huskily:

"And, Helen, you are that woman—that woman for whom I've waited all the lonely years!"

Helen sat up with a start. Her hands flew to her cheeks. She could feel them burning—burning like coals of fire.

What had she done?

She looked up at Donald through tear-dimmed eyes, and asked brokenly:

"Oh, what *must* you think of me?"

Donald pressed her hand to his lips and whispered:

"Nothing, dear, but that which is good and pure."

IV

ANOTHER week passed by in a whirl. That intangible something became more tangible, more powerless to be resisted.

John Henry, wholly innocent of his wife's duplicity, came and went as he had always done. He saw Helen cooking, sewing, feeding the chickens and mending his clothes as he had seemed to always have seen her. So far as he was concerned, everything was just as it should be. As long as his meals were on time, so long as Helen kept his clothes mended and in a handy place, he was happy. Life was to him a round of eating, sleeping and going through a daily routine. An undisturbed, peaceful and uninterrupted existence was John Henry's idea of happiness. And he got it.

But Helen, living her double life, was experiencing a turmoil of indescribable emotions. And now it was Saturday night again. She remembered with a shudder of repulsion what the morning would bring. Oh, that she could just once avoid that nerve racking Sunday morning event. She went about her duties with jerky, feverish movements.

And then the note came!

Helen opened it with trembling fingers.

She read it over and over until the words seemed to burn into her brain. Donald Strong wanted her to go away with him! He loved her. She was all in all to him. He wanted her above all else.

Helen sank limply into a low chair. Here was escape at last. No more monotonous days of colorless, uneventful existence. Several times she caught her-

self visualizing the consequences of such an act, but she brushed these gloomy possibilities as ruthlessly aside as she would sweep cobwebs from her home. She *wanted* to go!

She managed to go through the numberless tasks her housekeeping required of her with feverishly moving body, hardly comprehending the why or wherefore of the duties she had been daily accustomed to for twenty years.

Her getting away was a comparatively easy matter. John Henry worked at the store on Saturday nights until twelve. She would be well on her way by then. He would not miss her until morning, for he seldom, if ever, came to her room to bid her goodnight. She hesitated about leaving a word of farewell, but finally she wrote a brief note, merely stating that she had gone away with someone who understood. She placed this under the rolling pin on the kitchen table, in full sight. She knew John Henry always came to the kitchen for a drink of water before retiring. He would find the note.

It was about eleven-thirty o'clock when Helen May Brown walked out of the little kitchen that she had known so intimately for twenty years. She felt as if she were fairly stepping out of her world, for how very different would be her life with a man like Donald.

Again she slipped through the broken fence, and in a moment was with the man who wanted her—the man who understood!

Neither of them spoke as they sped through the night. The cool air was glorious against their faces. They snuggled down comfortably in the roomy roadster. Donald was speeding. The speedometer registered fifty miles an hour. Through lanes, under drooping trees that wrapped them around and about with welcome shadow, they sped. Hayfields, dotted with innumerable piles of hay, like weird animals in the moonlight, came to view, and then rolled on by them. And then—

A blowout!

Helen jumped, frightened.

Donald, disgusted that such tough luck should happen, stopped the car and got out.

Helen smiled happily as she noted he used no profanity. John Henry would have said something not found in the Sunday school papers under a similar condition.

She leaned back, relaxing herself completely, and waited for Donald to jack up the car and change tires.

The moon, almost full, looked down upon a peaceful scene. A large barn stood out in the silver moonlight like a great black bulk. A group of elms was growing by the road, but the moonlight failed to reveal what might be back under their drooping boughs. The air was balmy, of the softness of velvet against the cheek. Helen, feeling sure she heard voices, peered into the darkness under the elms.

The longer she looked the more convinced she became that two people were sitting there. Slowly two figures gathered on shape, and one of them appeared to be a girl in white. There was a black streak across her back that was either a black sash or a man's arm. Helen smiled at the romance of it. She was happy too. She was having a romance also. It had come late, but a man loved her now, madly, wholeheartedly and without restraint. She felt like a happy, carefree girl, with the moonlight, the trees and the man she loved so near her. She almost laughed aloud in her new found happiness, but the laugh died before it was born upon her lips. The white figure under the elms was speaking.

"Yes, Jack, I think I love you—I'm not sure though. How I *do* wish mother had lived—I need her so. And now, as never before!"

Donald climbed into the car. The car moved. Helen's face was set, stern, and her mouth made a straight, hard line across it. The car gathered speed.

Donald was saying something about the tire trouble.

Helen heard him laugh, but she did not join him. She sat back stiffly, her limbs aching with the strain of it. That

girl under the elms—she needed her mother—suppose—suppose—

Suddenly she clutched Donald's arm.

"I can't do it! Take me back—please. Quick, before I weaken!"

Donald stopped the car so suddenly he came near stripping the gear.

"What's the matter, dear? Are you ill?" he asked, solicitously.

"No—no—my daughter—I didn't tell you about her. She needs me—I'm her *mother*—take me back, *please*. Hurry! My God, what *was* I thinking about!" Helen cried out tensely.

Donald gasped. The situation was almost beyond him.

"But, Helen, I love you—I want you—you are mine. We belong to each other. I *won't* give you up!" Donald breathed, reluctant to lose this woman who was the embodiment of all that he had waited for—the personification of all that was worth while, all that was dear to him.

And, suiting action to words, he started the car again. Helen looked at him, astonished, frightened. She begged. She pleaded. But Donald sat like a carved figure, eyes glued on the road ahead.

With a quick movement, obeying a sudden mad impulse, Helen reached over and grasped the steering wheel.

The car lurched to one side and sped headlong into a field that ran some distance beside the road. Donald made a desperate attempt to right it, but it was too late.

The car struck a large pile of hay and threw them both out.

Helen lay perfectly still for a few moments and then got to her feet painfully. She examined Donald. He was breathing. He opened his eyes and looked at her.

Satisfied that he was not seriously hurt, and marveling at her calmness, Helen picked up her handbag and hurried across the field.

Reaching the road, she looked back. Donald was getting to his feet very slowly.

With her hand to her eyes Helen dashed down the road, looking to neither the right or the left. She ran like one blind, groping in a room for the light, and finding none there.

The moon had lost its splendor for the sun was coming into its own when Helen let herself into the little kitchen. All the way over the weary miles she had tramped, her limbs aching and like lead, she had prayed and hoped against hope that John Henry had not found the note.

With an effort she staggered forward, clutching at the table. The faint rays from the window, mixture of moonlight and sunlight, rested on the rolling pin, and the note was there. For once John Henry Brown had not taken a drink of water before going to bed.

With a choking sob Helen sank slowly to the floor. For the first time in her life she had fainted.

V

SLOWLY coming back to consciousness she looked about her. The little alarm clock on the shelf over the stove said the time was seven o'clock. It was Sunday morning. Helen placed paper and kindling in the stove. She struck a match and lit the paper. She began preparations for breakfast. Getting potatoes from the box under the table she sat down and began peeling them. John Henry began stirring around in his room. He dropped a shoe. Then followed a muttered word of profanity. Helen listened. She knew what was coming next. It came.

"Helen, where's my shirt?"

Helen May Brown looked up from her potatoes and smiled. The smile was full of irony.

"In the bottom dresser drawer, to the right, John Henry," she replied.

THE LIAR

By Louise Winter

I THINK I was born a liar. My earliest memories contain lies that got me out of scrapes at school and saved me from punishment at home. I developed a reputation for carelessness, quite undeserved, for it was easier to say I had misplaced my lesson books than to admit I had failed to devote the proper time to study.

My parents lied to each other, and so I inherited this curious aversion to the truth. With my later knowledge, I realize that my father loved my mother. His boorish manner, when they were alone, was assumed to cover a tenderness that he thought it unmanly to display. And my mother hated my father. I know now it was hate I surprised in her eyes when she was submitting to his caresses. And they passed for a couple in which the woman loved and the man ungraciously permitted her to love him.

With such parents it was natural that a sensitive child, such as I was, should grow to appreciate the lie of least resistance. It became the law of my being and I practiced so that I could lie intelligently with my eyes as well as with my lips. My one aim was not to be found out, and in time I grew so proficient that my mistakes were seldom brought home to me.

From a delicate, fanciful child, I developed into a delicate, fanciful woman, and, meeting a man who, I thought, held the truth as lightly as I did, I married him. He was rich and he affected to despise wealth; he was sensitively keen to every phase of emotion and he revered asceticism; he had a clever, subtle mind and he attempted brusque honesty.

I let him woo me even after we were married, and as he could not penetrate the tissues I had skilfully woven to shield my soul from his gaze, my mystery fascinated him.

I was afraid of my soul. I had never met it face to face, never communed with it in dark places, and I feared some day it would rise from its slothful slumbers, shake off the languorous veil of falsehood in which I had wrapped it, and confront me accusingly.

My husband, in those first days, searched for my soul. He wanted the real me, he said, but I dropped the white curtains before my eyes lest some faint glimmer should appear and show him the way to the cavern where I had buried my soul.

I was supposed to be beautiful, and in my husband's eyes was the light of satisfied possession which made me realize I had succeeded in blinding him also to the truth. For I was not beautiful. But I was vain, and I knew the power of beauty and I loved power.

And so I studied how to drape my heavy hair over my ears—ill-shaped ears—to hide the hollows at the back of my neck. I wore loose gowns that called attention to my slenderness and covered up my awkward length of limb, and I spent long hours in front of my mirror learning to use my arms so that every gesture should spell grace. My eyes were pale, neither gray nor green, but I dyed my lashes so that the eyes beneath should be curious and compelling. And I reddened the thin line of my lips, so that when a man let his gaze dwell upon them they suggested the closed heart of a red rose.

My husband saw all these things and

he persuaded himself that he saw more; that underneath the artificial woman I had carefully built up was an altar to passion on which he might light the fires of sacrifice.

But the woman he sought did not exist. She had striven so hard to present a lying surface to the world that underneath that surface was emptiness.

His eyes followed me about and they always asked the same question, but I met it cleverly with a lie. When the question became too intense I smothered it with kisses, but after a time they failed to satisfy him. I had given him all I had to give and I saw him wearying of the farce, and yet I went on pretending that what he was seeking lay just around the corner and he would find it tomorrow or perhaps the day after that. And so I led him along a flower-decked way for over a year, delighting secretly in my ability to trace out such a tortuous path.

And then one morning I awoke and found him gone. He left me a note. He had not married for this, he wrote. He had married for a home, for children, for the things other men had. If he had merely wanted a woman he would have bought a slave in the market, but he had wanted a woman's soul, and after a long search he had come to the conclusion that I had none. I did not know the meaning of love, for love in its supreme expression had a touch of the spirit. I was beautiful, but there was no foretaste of eternity in my embraces.

II

I SHUT myself up and went over the thing from the beginning. I did not shed tears, for tears are for the despairing, and I was a long ways from despair.

The first fact that I had to face was that I had made a mistake in my judgment of his character. A year had driven it slowly home to me. He was no liar!

Born to wealth, he valued a million less than a dollar earned by one's own toil! Responsive to beauty in its sensuous form, he saw something to admire in the austere régime of the monastery, and, clever and subtle as he was, he nevertheless admired a straightforward answer to a plain question.

He had asked me a question, asked it repeatedly, and I had answered it with a lie. At first he had believed, and then gradually doubt had crept in, and now he had found me out and so he left me.

I had never dreamed that he had really wanted the domestic type of woman; that with a man's passion for making over the creature he selects to be his mate he had attempted to read me into the role he had evolved in his own mind.

I looked scornfully into the glass. Even the band of gold on the third finger of my left hand did not stamp me with wifehood. I was the eternal mistress. In my eyes passion brooded, on my lips lay seduction.

I had made myself into this thing. Could I change now? And did I wish to change? After all, was it not a relief to be free, to be able to dispose of my time, of myself, as I wished?

I was luxuriously housed and his wealth would enable me to go on living in the same fashion.

I could have communicated with him, but I made no attempt to do so. To the world I said he was away and I smiled as I said it, and the impression got abroad that he was on some delicate mission that entailed secrecy. I fostered that impression, letting my eyes and lips lie harmoniously.

Months passed. Now and again my soul struggled to free itself, to lift its head to the light and demand a reckoning, but I smothered each abortive attempt. Ah, no, dear soul, I lied sweetly. I am not ready today—perhaps tomorrow—it was the same specious line of argument with which I had baffled my husband.

I told myself I was content; that as yet I had not missed him. I believed he would return, and as he had been away from me once or twice before, I per-

suaded myself that this was merely one of his business trips.

Fatuously, I reasoned that he could not do without me; that I had grown into his inner life; that he needed me and in time the need would be too great to be denied. Then he would return. And what would he find? The wife, not the mistress; the potential mother, not the favorite; the home, not the mere roof over his head? Could I undo the lie which I had woven year after year so skilfully that now even I did not know which was the true *me!*

Slowly it came to me that outwardly, at least, I could produce such a change. A different arrangement of my hair, an austerity in my dress, a freedom from paint and cosmetics, and I could pass for the wife of an artisan.

And then, one day, when I was trying out my new role, we met. Chance led me to a nearby town where he had interests, but I had not remembered that when I had selected this place as a temporary refuge. We met in the street and he was with a woman. He passed me by; he did not see me. He was guiding her across the street, his hand under her elbow, his head bent to hers.

Rage consumed me and I wanted to strike at them both. My brain whirled under the shock. He had passed me by, unconscious of my presence; no wave of emotion had spread from my soul to his, no leap of his heart had proclaimed my nearness, no magnetic current had rooted him to the spot. He had passed on. I was a stranger to him. And the woman? Oh, God! The woman—what was she?

I rushed back to the little hotel where I was staying and I wrote to him.

"I can give you news of your wife," I said.

Even in that moment of emotional stress I did not write "I am your wife! Come to me!"

It was the next day before my messenger found him and delivered the letter, and in those hours I think I regretted every lie I had ever lived.

It was noon before he came to me, and I had compromised on the role in which I should appear to him. I covered my ears, small and shapeless, but my face was guiltless of paint. I wore a loose white garment, but it was made of cheap material.

He came into the room, and when he saw me he frowned.

"Are you trying to masquerade as an angel?" he asked brutally.

This was his greeting. After three months he still distrusted. I think I turned pale. A curious tightness in my throat prevented my speaking in my usual tones.

"Would you come back if I told you I was through with masquerades?"

He was still frowning and he hesitated before he answered:

"It would depend on what was the real you."

I thought of the other woman and I cast myself upon his mercy.

"I don't know. Will you help me to find out?"

He came toward me slowly, his dark eyes searching, searching—

I bared my breast to him. Could he pierce through and find my soul? Was it still quivering, or had it perished under my last rebuff? I waited, but what he saw must have satisfied him, for he continued to approach until he put out his hand and touched me.

He stared deep into my pale eyes, no longer fringed with soft, dark lashes; he stared at my pale lips, no longer moistened with red paste; he pushed back my hair and my pale ears were revealed. And so I stood before him and I felt as if he saw me as I really was, naked and ugly.

And then I think he pitied me, for he took me in his arms and he kissed me—gently.

III

We went home together to the big house which had held so many memories that it had never seemed empty to me. And I am going to have a child. And I tell myself that I am glad, very glad. But am I? One lie leads to another. I want to believe that I love him, that I am happy; but, oh, soul of

mine, I have lied to you so much that now I do not know what is true!

He kisses me, but there is no passion in his kiss; he takes me in his arms, but they never hurt me; he holds my hand, but there is no thrill in it. He says this is the better way and my lips agree with him, but I wonder if the warmth of his love goes elsewhere, and all he gives to me is the conventional lie.

He has never spoken to me of that other woman.

THE END OF EVERYTHING

By Harry A. Earnshaw

I AM in a state of revolt. The one woman in the world no longer loves me. I was informed by the bank this morning that I must pay the note I endorsed for my dear friend Jack three months ago. I lost my job this afternoon. I owe a garage bill of $168.37. My grandfather's will has just been read, and I learn that he left me sixty dollars, payable in ten annuities. The remaining three million he left to the Standard Oil Company. I realize now that the world is full of fools and ingrates, divided fifty-fifty. The only thing worth living for is death. I would like to place a bomb under the whole universe. I am saying goodbye to all the old restraints. I don't care what happens to me. I am going to try everything once. I am going to have my fling.

I shall start with something I've always secretly wanted to do, something people hardly ever talk about, but a thing of which I have often suspected many of my very best friends. I shall do it this very night.

I am going down to the Public Library.

MISERERE

By James Nicholas Young

I HAVE no wife. I have no cares nor responsibilities. My ample fortune is safely invested in government bonds. The chef who prepares my food is a genius. I am handicapped by no bad habits. I have no enemies.

I should be happy.

But I am not.

Every morning, when no one else is around in the Park, my nurse spanks me!

THE theory that really to know two women one must introduce them is ridiculous. It often results in a divorce.

THE SINISTER CITY

By P F. Hervey

I

JASPER POND had been delicate as a child and did not enter the Union School until he had some three years' advantage of his playmates. His father, Old Man Pond, was the magnate of the village of Heron Corners, and conducted a queer little provincial factory with farm shrewdness. In time, Heron Corners might take on the proportions of a manufacturing center, and social gradations would develop; but at present it was only a monopoly in embryo.

Jasper was a sensitive boy, and his few years' seniority over his fellows was largely responsible for his contempt for the yokels among whom he lived. His most intense desire was to please people, but people worth pleasing struck him as the initial essential. A grudge against society is generally translated into a wish to disregard its laws. We all take that field where we fancy we may win most respect; and when we fail to secure approbation for our virtue, we seek to gather the compliment of horror at our vice.

Jasper, in short, slowly put together an ideal of a man of the world; and by world, Jasper meant underworld.

So slowly does a working philosophy, a definite opinion of life's values, reach a goal of objective action that it was not until he was out of high school, with nearly twenty years to his tall figure, that Jasper realized that his career was to be that of a cynical priest of evil. He had always been quiet in the community; and the undercurrent of squalid viciousness in the country town rather disgusted him. He wanted to add to diabolism a dash of bright color, an air of suavity and good humor; and these demands pointed plainly to the metropolis, New York.

It happened that in school he had distinguished himself with several clever drawings; and in this circumstance he discerned his opportunity. A feature film and a novel had informed him that an artist is to be defined as a person of loose morals who makes a living by the seduction of his models. His mind was made up; and he went to his father with the suggestion that he be permitted to study art.

The elder Pond scratched a chin that was uncertain as to whether it nourished a beard or required shaving, and turned his small eyes on his son's face. After a little silent thought, he gave a grunt that Jasper construed as consent.

It was on a September morning that Jasper clambered into the local train with a bulging grip. He was excited and happy and a little tremulous. More briefly, he was twenty. His lips curled with unforgiving scorn as he watched the smoke of Heron Corners thin into dimness in the sighing Autumn air.

As the train shot through a tunnel, he caught a pale impression of his face in the window. His blue eyes and chubby cheeks were rather unfortunate, he thought; but he looked forward to that hour when experience should have chiseled lines of wisdom and weariness on the now guileless mask. His thoughts moved among carnal delights; he saw himself a figure of delicious loathing to be pointed out by those dull fingers that belong to the good. Give him, say, three years . . .

II

In the train which he met at the junction, Jasper noticed a man whose face he studied with admiration. He was thin and erect, and his skull, with his prominent, affirmative nose, and compressed lips, called up the thought of a hawk. Jasper wondered wistfully whether even experience could make him look like that.

By chance he was placed at the same table with the stranger in a crowded diner, and he found the act of passing the salt the usual opening for talk.

The hawk-faced man's name proved to be Churton; he smiled understandingly at Jasper and drew him out with blunt questioning. In a little while he had learned that Jasper was pointed for Art School and that he had an unsophistication of which he was self-conscious and which he ardently desired to correct.

Mr. Churton drew his tight lips tighter, raised his eyebrows, and said in a sententious voice:

"The city, my young friend, is a place of temptations. You say that this is your first visit. I hope you have been carefully warned. The life you are about to enter is very different from the quiet and peaceful innocence of the country. Tell me, where have you planned to live?"

"Why I thought maybe I could find a room near the school," said Jasper.

Mr. Churton shook his head a little skeptically.

"I seriously doubt if that would be a wise course. The young men and women with whom you will be thrown are in many cases depraved in their habits. They would be anything but a good influence. I wonder . . . Perhaps I can do something for you . . . How would you like to live in a Settlement House?"

Jasper's face fell. He had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Here was someone who was trying to reform him even before he had plunged into his career of sin.

Destiny, that sentimental old lady, had, apparently, no plot sense; Jasper's scornful laughter at the proffers of reformation was not scheduled to peal out until the last chapter.

Yet, as he looked at Mr. Churton's sharp, suspicious face, Jasper felt that this was a man who knew life, who was strong, who was worthy of emulation. And Jasper desired to please. Within an hour of these conclusions, he had in his possession a note of introduction, an address, and a deal of solemn advice.

Jasper shook hands with Mr. Churton as the train glided to a full stop in the Grand Central. He picked his way bewilderedly through the crowds and followed Mr. Churton's directions to the subway.

The Settlement House was downtown on the East Side, and Jasper found it to be a dirty, sombre building, a kind of Y. M. C. A. in Hell.

He was received by the secretary with cordiality and shown to a musty room.

From Mr. Churton he had gathered that he would be privileged to live here for a small payment, in return for an evening or so each week to be devoted to the saving of the downtrodden classes.

In the dining room over anemic soup he shooks hands with several co-workers: a man whose brains appeared to be in his muscles and who looked far too stupid to be dishonest; a thin, shrill-voiced lady, and a fat one with a throaty laugh and an auditorium manner; two or three insignificant youths; and a girl with glasses who subjected Jasper to a long scrutiny.

Jasper sat silent and listened to the hum of talk. He heard mention of all sorts of crusades, movements, and endeavors, and felt sadly ignorant. In the sharp light of contrast these people appeared to him intelligent and a little awesome; he neglected to perceive that they had only statistics in place of imaginations.

Some time later, in an atmosphere of aggressive piety, and surrounded by righteousness, Jasper, the diabolist, crawled into bed.

III

THE next day Jasper appeared at the Art League, and signed his applications. He had planned to paint the nude; it seemed to him that it would prove not only a rakish study but a revealing one. The rapid questions, however, which were put to him, were disconcerting; and he stammered answers that condemned him as an amateur.

Since he had only the rudiments of drawing, he was told that he had better begin in the Antique Class. When Jasper discovered that the dreary duty of the Antique Class was to copy casts in plaster, conventionalized ferns, and the curves of unromantic statuary, he was bitterly disappointed.

But, he reflected, it was, after all, merely a stage in his development; the banquet must naturally begin with thin soup; and he could not expect sugar plums in the first course.

He was to report for work the following morning, and he had before him a glorious fall afternoon to squander in revelry. The chattering, self-assured groups of students in the school made him feel a trifle uneasy, and he emerged upon Fifty-seventh Street and strolled slowly down Broadway. A café of the gilded order took his attention; with a sudden resolve he entered.

Half a dozen men leaned against the bar, talking quietly or gazing abstractedly at their glasses.

Jasper looked about nervously, then cleared his throat and cried:

"Come on, fellows! The next drink is on me. Everybody fill up!"

There was a hush, then heads were turned, and Jasper found himself confronting a battery of perplexed, incredulous eyes.

The fat-necked bartender slid towards him.

"Say, you!" he exploded, "what do you think this is? What do you mean yellin' like—"

He broke off as he saw Jasper's frightened, innocent face, and then smiled magnanimously.

"Look-a-here, kid, don't try any of them tank-town habits on Broadway. What'll you have?"

"Beer," murmured Jasper faintly.

He gulped his drink hastily, and did not allow his gaze to wander from the floor. Like many diffident people he had nerved himself up to the point of over-assertion. Now in the hideous reaction he felt his ears redden as he heard the snickers and whispers of the other patrons.

He turned blindly towards the doorway.

"Hey!" shouted the bartender. "You better pay me first."

Jasper, wishing that the earth might yawn for his luckless body, dropped a half-dollar on the bar and fled for the street.

His retreat was an obvious panic. For some time he walked on in a confusion of mind. The laughter of the drinkers at his egress was exaggerated by imagination; he shuddered. His brain was harrowed by the possibility that one of them might encounter him in later years —and remember. To at least six inhabitants of New York his reputation would never seem authentic.

The crowds among whom he now began to find himself were of brighter plumage; and Jasper fancied (and hoped) that his deviltry had struck a discord because of an unharmonious locality. A huge sign declared that the new musical comedy, *The Laughing Lover,* was nightly delighting thousands. It was Wednesday; it was two o'clock; Jasper entered and purchased a ticket.

He enjoyed the performance amazingly. Only one blot marred the white page of his content. He noted that while champagne and a risqué gayety seemed to be the view of life in the comedy, the audience that witnessed the presentation appeared dull, respectable, and observant of a hundred unwritten rules.

Was all mirth, all flaunting of standards, a myth confined to the phantasms of art? Jasper wondered. Everyone seemed so quiet and so urbane in the big audience. No one drank cham-

pagne out of a pocket flask! No one wore pajamas!

Jasper ended by concentrating his attention upon the performance. He thought the chorus the most beautiful crowd of girls he had ever seen—he was in the balcony and so far remote from plot and pulchritude as to render each enchanting—and as the cast lined up before the final curtain, a determination arose in his mind.

In three brief lines the reward was delivered, the comic father was discomfited, the fat widow was exposed, the lovers were united, and somebody had been divorced. A thin number of spectators were already threading the aisles, in that unrequired hurry which characterizes New York, even while the performers were singing the only song they appeared to enjoy.

Jasper was reminded of the fact that a horse always runs with more interest towards its stable than away from it.

However, he did not hurry at least; indeed, he loitered.

The explanation of his conduct may be made by a picture: a few moments later an innocent-eyed youth was standing nervously near the stage door.

Jasper was at once disappointed and relieved to find that he was alone. Two chauffeurs leaned against the structure not far away, but their purpose was patently not his. The door opened, a girl came out, and Jasper trembled. It opened again, and three others stepped upon the street. More followed at regular intervals. Fearful lest all escape him, Jasper plucked up his ebbing courage and, as a tall girl came out alone, he walked up to her. How was Jasper to know that Mazie Mallon was, at just this period, engaged in hooking a college boy whose father had less education but more money? How was Jasper to know that Mazie had an old-fashioned fondness for formal introductions anyway, even in ordinary circumstances?

"M-miss," stammered Jasper, "I—I should like awfully to know you."

Mazie turned her astute glance in his direction.

It was not her part to play casual comradeships in any case; and when she saw the woolless lamb who had accosted her, she wasted no time.

"How dare you speak to me?"

Jasper opened his mouth in surprise, then a weak smile overspread his face. He had heard somewhere that persistence is the greatest of virtues in vice, and with a spurt he strode after her and gained her side.

"Please," he began, "let me—"

She wheeled and halted.

"If you bother me any more," said Mazie in a shrill voice, "I'll call an officer."

A small group of passers-by had collected to observe the comedy. Mazie moved on, her head high in the air, her lips twisted in an ugly curve.

Jasper stood staring with a vacant expression.

He heard a chuckle, caught the words of a bystander: "Oh, nothing. The boy tried to pick her up, and she threw him down—hard."

It seemed to Jasper that the whole planet was witnessing his defeat. He turned and hurried down the crowded street that to his brain seemed to hold hordes of jeering, smirking faces. As he passed the two chauffeurs and noted their contemptuous grins, tears of mortification sprang into Jasper's eyes.

IV

At dinner that evening in the Settlement House, Jasper ate in a stillness that was anything but negative. Once or twice, looking up, he saw that the girl with the glasses, whom he had faintly noticed the evening before, was gazing at him with a certain interest.

Later, in the library, as he fumbled among a number of those periodicals which exist by means of the fallacy that dullness necessarily means profundity, she moved in his direction.

"Well, how did you enjoy your first day in the city?" she asked with a friendly smile.

Quite suddenly Jasper felt the need of a confidant. There was sympathy

here, he thought; and he wanted to blurt out the tale of his failures to understanding ears.

"Oh, it was awful," he said. "I'll tell you frankly what I did. I don't know whether you'll be shocked, but I— I— Well, I went into a saloon and there were some men there—"

Her eyes widened.

"Do you mean to tell me you are trying already to collect information at first hand? Why that's splendid! And aren't conditions terrible? No wonder you say you were shocked. You believe in absolute prohibition, of course, Mr. Pond?"

Jasper's lips moved with futility. How could he disillusion her after that? But at the same time he couldn't let her retain the sordid impression that he was a reformer. To go back now and explain his real purpose in entering the bar was too difficult. He'd adjust her ideas with the second half of his story; what did he care what she thought? He had wished for sympathy for his failures; but he found now that he desired to flaunt his aims in her face. He plunged on to an abrupt transition.

"See here, I want to make myself clear. I went around to a stage door this afternoon, and spoke to one of the chorus girls—"

"Mr. Pond! All in one day? Why I never heard of such zeal! Have you spoken to Mr. Henney in the house? He's very much interested in vice investigation. I should think it would pay you to get in touch with the organizations."

"But," protested Jasper in a thin voice, "you don't understand."

"Now you're going to be modest," said the girl with the glasses archly. "Mr. Pond, you've got to have a proper self-estimation. And if you go on as you have begun, you will do great good in the world. Oh, Mr. Henney," she cried to a figure at the other end of the room, "will you come here a moment?"

Jasper, to his bewilderment, felt a thrill of pride.

He began, in his groping mind, to fancy that he had done something noble.

And it dawned upon him rather suddenly that he was at last winning the respect he craved.

He wondered if he mightn't even win homage in the same field? Perhaps, perhaps, it was worth trying . . .

V

THAT first impressions are of stupendous importance has long been dinned into our tired ears. The fabrication of Jasper's desire to investigate and to reform went about among the settlement workers, and was enlarged upon in the process. His place was secure. Jasper found that he was not a little gratified by the slight murmur of applause from their ranks.

The Art League occupied him part of the day, but he avoided the noisy, careless students who spoke a language he could not understand. At the Settlement House he found opportunities for all orders of mild but engrossing labor.

Then two months later he addressed a small suffrage meeting and discovered that he had in him the elements that make for platform success. He could stand upon his feet and utter sentimental nonsense with all the theatricality of a stock-actor; in short, he was an orator.

From that time on his road was smooth before him. The girl with the glasses had much to do with his victories. She flattered him and listened to him, and finally made him ask-her-to-permit-him-to-call-her Miriam.

It would have been amusing at this stage of the piece for an observer acquainted with Jasper's earlier ambitions to have beheld him conferring with leaders of the Society for the Elimination of Vice, or conducting a committee-meeting of the disappointed matrons and silly young ladies who are responsible for that form of artistic uplift known as the Drama League. Or, better yet, would it have been to have heard him thundering out anathema against the liquor traffic at a meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance

Union. Man is an adaptable animal, and Jasper soon forgot the type of life to which he had dedicated his energies. And he had not a sufficient humor to enjoy the comparison, and the irony of his present.

He had desired to be dissipated, it is true, through no intimate love for dissipation itself, but only that he might secure a certain respect. When he found that he was winning more than he had ever hoped for by means of the opposite extremes, he was acute enough to swing to the other part.

And in this, the very characteristics, which had militated against the one career, proved advantageous in the other.

His youth, his innocent face, served him handsomely. Before long he concluded his attendance at the Art League and devoted himself entirely to Service . . . The secretaryship of two Y. M. C. A.s was offered him, and he was compelled, through the many pressing demands upon his time, to refuse both. Before long he blossomed out in a garment that resembled a frock coat, and permitted his collar to proclaim him a boy-orator.

At the end of two years, Jasper's face had deepened into maturity. His position was secure. Also Miriam had seen to it that he was to be the happiest of men. He was working early and late; he found a fantastic pleasure in a large correspondence with right-minded secretaries of various societies, and propagandists who, even in this, the twentieth century, cherish the monstrous delusion that there can be one rule which will fit all people. He knew, and was known among the people who, like the half-world, make their living through vice, and, like rakes, secure their entertainment through it.

Jasper's health became delicate; he found he was growing nervous. He decided to pay more than the usual flying visit to Heron Corners. A month's rest should be sufficient recuperation. The afternoon before his departure he addressed a final gathering on prohibition in connection with the Billy Sunday campaign.

Afterwards he sought out Miriam.

"Dear one," said Jasper, lifting his throat impressively, "I am going home for a month. I need the rest. When I return I wish you would marry me."

Her eyes glittered like stars behind her glasses which had the further advantage of magnifying them.

"Oh, Jasper," she murmured, "you are so good! You were magnificent this afternoon, you have a great future! And I'm glad you're going to the pure, lovely country for a rest. I can almost see it: the white houses nestling in the silent hills. There, human beings are kind and simple . . . It seems strange that I say all this. But one grows so despondent in the city with its corruption and its evils and its temptations that only the few can escape. It's so wicked, so—so *sinister!*"

Jasper kissed her with a quiet reverence. No one would have accused him of being in love with her. But he added with the required fervor:

"And you will wait for me, my love?"

Miriam threw her arms about his neck.

"I will wait for you—forever!" she cried.

VI

THE sudden contrast from his life of strenuous action threw Jasper, after the first week home, into frequent depressions. After he had attempted to utilize his artistic knowledge by making portraits of his father and sisters and then explaining the lack of a likeness by the declaration that they were "impressions," he found the time hanging heavy.

The fact was that no one seemed interested in his later career. The vague curiosity of his father was soon satisfied and after that, few appeared curious as to what he did or how he did it. Jasper began to miss the adulation to which he had grown accustomed, and his resentment found outlet in a cordial dislike for the villagers.

The dolts didn't appreciate him! And he was booked to loiter here for three more weeks.

Presently Jasper found that nobody was really aware of his great success, and that, further, he was even an object of some pity. He hated the town worse than ever. And then his father told him that he was ready to hand over the management of the factory if Jasper would consent to remain in Heron Corners. Tactfully and at some length Jasper refused.

One day he met little Gracie Nash, with whom he had gone to school, on the street before his house. There was really nothing to do in the town, and—well, she was really quite pretty.

Jasper asked if he mightn't call on her. The next evening was appointed. Gracie's pert, colorful mouth, and rather scornful eyes perplexed him a little. She looked as if she had been through some bitter experience of the soul.

That quiet Spring evening he strolled down the main street and stared about him with wearied eyes. There was absolutely no attraction in the place, he thought; what on earth did people do by way of amusement?

He came abreast of the entrance of the dilapidated Gordon House and heard the sound of laughter and talk from the bar. Quite idly, and hardly knowing with what idea in view, he stepped inside.

Jim Gordon was behind the bar, and there were a dozen men standing before it whose faces Jasper had known from boyhood. He was suddenly aware that a spirit of expectation had fallen upon the place at his appearance.

"Well, Jasper," piped up one acquaintance, "after New York I suppose this place ain't good enough for you."

For a moment Jasper hesitated.

Then the desire to impress people to win their respect entered his mind. These fellows were provincials, but after all they were no fools. As for his circle in New York, his reputation was quite safe there.

"Jim," he said, "set 'em up for the gang. And give me a cocktail, a—a Bronx."

"Don't make 'em, Jasper," said Gordon to Jasper's relief. "Ever tried a hot Scotch? That's what the boys are all drinkin' around here now, until it gets warm weather."

It was after the second round that Jasper began to see how wrong he had been in his estimate of the town. It might not be a bad idea, after all, to settle down here and run the factory. He'd be the top man of the place if he did. He'd get a chance here for the sort of thing he couldn't get in the big city. He'd . . .

"Have another, boys!" he cried, interrupting his own thoughts.

In the hum of salacious talk and high laughter Jasper began to feel pleasantly reckless.

One of the men suddenly burst out with a confidence—"Say, have you heard about Rob Nash's daughter, Gracie? She's . . ."

Jasper listened with shining eyes.

He recalled his appointment with Gracie on the next evening, and a peculiar smile crossed his face.

"Have another, boys!" he ordered.

"Say, Jasper, you must have seen a lot since you been away," someone said. "You certainly know how to drink. Here's to you!"

"Oh, I guess, I've seen enough," said Jasper modestly. The report of a vice-investigating committee came to his memory. Jasper culled liberally from it, and without definitely naming himself, hinted that he might have played a considerable part in several savory incidents. He discovered that he was the centre of gaping faces. Men stared at him in respectful wonder. His name as a *roué* was made . . .

* * * * * * *

It was half a year later that Miriam, the girl with the glasses, realized that she had spoken a more exact truth than she had intended. She had declared that she would wait for Jasper forever. She will.

HOW MY HUSBAND MUST DESPISE ME

By Laura Kent Mason

HOW my husband must despise me! He knows all my jokes, word for word, and yet he must smile each time I tell them. He knows all of my stories and knows how greatly I have exaggerated each one—to my own glorification. He knows that my sense of honor is rudimentary, that I'll tell a dozen lies to get out of being bored one single evening, and how I'd rather lie, usually, than tell the truth, anyhow. He knows how selfish I am, how I maneuver to get the most comfortable chair, the attention of the most attractive man, the best things to eat—and then pretend that it is all an accident.

My husband knows how stupid I am, how I pretend I've read books of which I've read only reviews, how I pretend to understand poetry and art, from which I've received only a dull glimmer of meaning. He knows how vain I am, how I force admiration, how I multiply my virtues. He nearly knows how old I am and hears me tell other people the age I hope they'll believe. He knows how ugly I am. He sees me at night, minus make-up and becoming clothes, and anointed with cold cream to keep away already visible wrinkles.

My husband knows that I hate all women and yet make pretty pretenses of friendliness with them. He knows how frankly brutal I talk when we are alone and yet with what elegant aloofness I discuss the same things in a crowd. He knows of little trivial affairs that I am having and how clumsy I am about concealing them. He knows what an enormous appetite I have; how, at home, I take second helpings of most ordinary foods and yet how daintily, even delicately, I eat—in public. He knows what a mean temper I have when I get up in the morning and what hateful things I can say the last thing at night.

Yet, usually, my husband is polite, attentive, affectionate. How he must despise me!

But, usually, I am polite, attentive, affectionate. And I know a few things about my husband, too!

MEN frequently marry to keep other men from getting the woman they desire. They are not always successful.

TECHNIQUE: In moving pictures, the expression of love by the exhalation of a large quantity of air.

UNWRITTEN CONFESSIONS

By Natica Hillis

I

IT was the night before I was married that my mother came into my room and in her languid, bored manner gave me some advice I have never forgotten. I had been brought up in a convent and had seen little of her since I was a small child. In the holidays she and my father were pursuing their fashionable ways of life as the seasons dictated and we children were left to rigid nurses and governesses.

In those days I was a little nervous of my mother. She had been a great beauty in her day and even then seemed the handsomest woman I knew. She was always remote from her children, interested in things other than they, and incapable of enthusiasm concerning them.

"My dear," she said, when she had sunk into a luxurious chair, "I haven't come to bore you with advice about the married state. I have come to give you, instead, the two most valuable warnings a mother can give a daughter who is as lovely as you. First, *never write to the man you love, and, second, never tell another woman about him.*"

"But, mother," I protested, "I've written heaps of letters to him and I always talk about him."

She smiled at me as though I were still a child.

"When you wake up," she said, "you will understand."

I did not then know what she meant.

The man I was to marry filled the world for me. To begin with, he had captured my girlish fancy by being exceedingly good-looking in his big, blond way. And he had sworn eternal love with all the romantic passion I craved. I was indignant that my mother could imagine I should ever tire of him, or he of me. She smiled as she saw the flush of anger on my face.

"How horrid of you!" I gasped. "I shall never love anyone else."

"My poor child," she replied, "what a dull existence you promise yourself!"

I spoke with the certainty of immaturity.

"I am not that kind, mother."

"My dear," she said more tenderly than I had ever known her to speak to me. "None of us creates himself. There's no such thing as free will except in theoretical theology. Your father breeds dogs and horses, as all the world knows. You must have heard him talking of the different strains necessary to produce what speed and stamina and courage are needed in them. A thoroughbred can't help galloping low, and a hackney can't help his high action. Women in our world can't help their destiny. You don't know what I mean, now, but you will some day. And when you do, remember never to write to any man what you feel toward him. And never believe there's a woman living who can be trusted to keep your secrets."

II

I AM reminded of all this tonight because my mother was killed in an automobile accident four months ago, and I am going through the *escritoire* in her boudoir. Here and there I have found little, meaningless things—a dried flower, an unsigned verse or two, but no letters except those from relatives.

If she had secrets, they died with her and there was never a coupling of her name with scandal while she lived.

Although she never mentioned the two pieces of advice she gave me, I think she knew that I took them. She was never demonstrative, but I knew that she approved of me and the way I ordered my life.

It was less than a year after my marriage that I found my husband had his consolations. They were costly, but we were both rich. I am sure that if he should be the victim of an accident and I had the going through of his desk, the discoveries would be entertaining.

After the first shock—which is, after all, mostly in the nature of outraged vanity—I said nothing more to him about his amours. He never boasted of them, as did so many men of his set. Sometimes he regretted them, he declared.

Men of the world of his type, representatives that is to say of old and rich families, are curiously sensitive about the honour of their women. There was never a man who visited us who was not, if he had a bad reputation with women, carefully watched by Ned. It was his idea, apparently, that only such would be dangerous to sophisticated women like me.

Since the ordinary rake has far fewer fascinations than he imagines, I took little interest in any of them. And this gave Ned the idea that I was absolutely safe.

He used to say that his wife must be like Cæsar's wife—above suspicion—until someone, who was better educated than he, said Cæsar's wife was so little above suspicion that she was divorced.

I began to think that my mother was wrong—that I was a cold woman, satisfied with position and wealth—until there came a young Frenchman to paint some panels after the manner of Puvis de Chavannes in one of the drawing-rooms. From the beginning I could see he had eyes for none but me, and yet he had spoken hardly a word. He was not asked to our table. We had, as a family, little tolerance for those not of our class. He was a painter hired to perform a task. This did not warrant us to inflict him upon our friends. Sometimes I used to watch him at his work. Ned hardly knew of his existence.

The affair began one night in the moonlight. The men staying with us were dull. Ned suspected two of being "after me," as he put it. But these self-confessed roués only made me yawn. The man who prided himself on his badness is as wearisome to me as the pious who prate of their own virtues.

I went out into the Italian garden.

Presently I heard the sound of someone behind me. It was the painter. I was gracious to him.

"What are you doing?" I asked. "Weaving verses to someone in France?"

"Watching your little feet dance in the moonbeams," he said.

"Then you *are* a poet," I insisted.

"Only since I saw you," he said tenderly.

Nobody had ever put such feeling into anything that was ever said to me. It seemed rather impertinent.

"Really, Mr. Coulevain," I said slowly, "one thought you were engaged to paint."

I knew I had wounded him. I wanted to hurt him.

He drew himself to his slim height and bowed. I had seen such a look in the eyes of a faithful dog whose master had struck at him with a whip.

A day or two later Ned asked me what I thought of the French painter.

If I disliked anything, I was always in the habit of describing it as "tedious." So I labeled such an opera as "Rigoletto," books by William de Morgan, and most of my relatives. I could say nothing to my husband which would give him the impression of such impassioned lack of interest.

"He's rather tedious," I said.

Ned's face broke into a smile. He was completely reassured.

Afterwards, when my life was filled with Coulevain and I knew I was not a woman of ice, the temptation to write

to him what I felt was almost irresistible. I wrote a hundred letters of love; but ere I sent them I remembered what my mother said and tore them up.

And I am very glad I did. Years later a woman I know was blackmailed by him for just such silly letters as I should have sent. Some of them even were published in the sort of papers the servants read.

III

We spend several months at our place near Westbury each year. The children all have ponies and one understands the air is good for them. And Meadow Brook and Piping Rock are conveniently near.

Once, during the time we spend there each season, Ned insists on going to the little church. My mother, when I used to mention it to her, said it was not a reversion to middle-class ancestry so much as the desire of the male to display himself and his progeny. We all have to go or submit to a week of sulkiness. Last week during the sermon I closed my eyes until I could hardly see through the tightened lids, and looked at Ned.

When one looks in this way the objects at which one gazes become vague and distorted. And yet always Ned seems to me like a giant rooster marching at the head of his hens and chicks. Mother was right. It is the male vanity prompting it. He has a quaint patriarchal air at dinner, after these rare visits to church. I can see him oozing satisfaction.

And, indeed, he may well be satisfied. I have kept my figure and my complexion, and never a trace of scandal has touched my name. And the children are all of them beautiful. Ned feels that he controls the destinies of his family. I am saved from the fates of many of the women he knows, because I am too cold to love any but myself. The phrase is his own.

When he says that I feel I hate him. Could he never tell, when I gave myself to him, it was with all the full passion of a first love? But, naturally, he had coarsened when he married me. He has often boasted openly that he had a mistress while at Yale.

One of his sisters is by way of being notorious. She cultivated me rather assiduously a year or two ago. She told me, as great marks of confidence, of intrigues which were common property. In return she hinted, very delicately, that I should confide in her.

She has always hated me, but I remembered my mother's warning. I am quite sure from what I know now that she wanted to entrap me to make good a rather reckless statement that she made about me to Ned.

People who don't like me always deny me a gift of humour. I've wondered sometimes if they were right. I think if ever they had the opportunity to see into my soul they would be startled to find that everything has its humorous aspect to me. I never see Ned but a contented, sleek rooster stalks into the room. And when he talks of his estates and the prospects that will be his children's, I see the rooster proclaiming to the world that the piece of grain the gods fling into his barnyard has been discovered by him alone. Ned! Paul Bourget never studied a woman as closely as I have studied him.

My mother, a few years after our marriage, stayed with us for a week at Lenox. It was a memorable visit for the reason that quite suddenly one day she said, "My dear, I've been watching you. If by these diversions of yours you have only the idea of revenging yourself on Ned for his neglect, is the game worth the candle?"

"If that were the reason," I admitted, "it wouldn't be. Of course, I was dreadfully miserable at first, when I found out what he was."

"I was, too," said my mother. "I imagined I was your father's ultimate conquest."

"But," I went on, "you reminded me that destiny came into the matter. The women of our family have been trained for generations to make men like them.

Very well, then, if their own men fail them!"

I shrugged my shoulders.

She never spoke to me about men after that.

She was very wise and knew that women who try to revenge themselves on their husbands inevitably come to grief.

I, instead, realized how matters stood between us.

IV

NONE suspected why my boys' tutor died by his own hand. I remember Ned was very much concerned over it. They found him in the gun-room, a place, by the way, where he had no right to be. In his hand was an old Westley-Richards dueling pistol. They said it was overstudy. That might well be. But only the dead man and I knew the truth.

There is something very engaging in the first love of a man who has set out to seek scholarship and practice celibacy. The gift of humour which my enemies deny me let me see something exquisitely strange in the statement that my love for him made me a better woman. But it is true. He struggled against me so bravely, so desperately conscious of his peril and his weakness and so hopeful of strength from hidden sources. I am told he was very brilliant intellectually and would have made a great name for himself. I found him very simple and good. I believe he was the first good man I ever met. And I believe, also, that he was none the worse for having known love before he died.

Ned had chosen the tragedy as an excuse for a bout of drinking. He wept when I took upon myself the expenses of the funeral, and insisted that the old mother should be pensioned for life. Ned actually expatiated on my goodness in putting white flowers on his coffin. Fortunately, I had mother's hold on my emotions, or I should have told him the truth.

I don't think I ever thought much about deeper things before I met my scholar. He sought to show me what a vain thing the life such as we led was. I was almost persuaded until he fell at my feet and wanted to kiss the hem of my garment.

I have never tried to take a man away from the woman he loved. So few men are worth that and all the trouble it brings. And, more than that, I am sorry for women. When they are unhappily married they look to a lover for the virtues they were disappointed in in a husband.

For me, men are experiments in emotions. Nearly always they disappoint. I have mentioned the two who disappointed me least of all the dozen or more that have loved me. It's curious how these two come back to me—the painter, who was a bad man, and the tutor, who was a good one.

I was musing about this past of mine when Ned came in. I could see he was anxious. And when he is anxious it means he fears some other man has power to fascinate me.

It is curious how the instinct for preserving the integrity of the family persists in a man like Ned, who has absolutely no right to lay down a moral code. I have seen the premonitory symptoms for some days now.

My youngest sister is to marry a wealthy young man who has been serving in the air squadron of the Allies. His best man is an English viscount whose wounds have won him the Distinguished Service Order and a furlough.

"Well, Ned?" I said, when he came into my room.

Ned has an idea that if he does not instantly come to the point, but beats about the bush a little, he is displaying subtlety. So he asked about the children's educational progress and questioned their French accent.

"So poor little Eleanor's going to be married!" he said.

As there was a big house-party assembled for the purpose, which would have been a bigger one had not Eleanor's grandmother recently died, the remark seemed not illuminating.

I never make the mistake of being

sarcastic with Ned. In my way I rather like him as the head of a household. He is still ornamental as a host.

"Why not?" I asked. "I was her age when you married me."

"She's married a decent sort," he said slowly. "Money and a good name and all that sort of thing."

Ned had no idea that I knew exactly to what he was leading.

I remembered far better than he my first meeting with Lord Bermondsey. I had never seen the man until yesterday, although Eleanor's fiancé had sent groups of soldiers in which they both were. But men in khaki always look so much alike and I had not been interested.

Viscount Bermondsey had come while I was out riding with the girls. I had no idea when I went into the hall that he was there. I saw a tall man with a tired, white face and smouldering eyes rise from his chair when I entered.

For a moment we stared at one another in silence.

Someone has said that women in such times as this see visions of the future. I know that I saw a man who had the power to blot out the memories of all the other men I had known.

Ned came in and broke the spell.

I remember that he stared uncomfortably from Lord Bermondsey to me and then back to the stranger. Ned has always rather an air when he introduces any attractive man to me. In its essence it is a ceremony calling attention to the other man that my lord and master has proprietary rights over me and bids the new man recognize them.

There are methods of being indiscreet which have their origin in just such decorous glances as I gave the viscount. I am seldom or never guilty of them, but this time my interest blazed out so vividly that even Ned saw.

Lord Bermondsey sensed that Ned was troubled and played his part excellently well. A stranger might have judged that he preferred Ned's horse and hound chatter to a word with me.

"That Bermondsey man," said Ned at last, "I understand he's rather a rotter. Beastly reputation with women and all that."

"Really?" I asked. "Who told you?"

"Report!" Ned answered. "Probably true though. What do you think of him?"

"Rather tedious, don't you think?" I said casually.

Ned went from the room humming a lively air.

He had reassured himself so completely.

I LOATHE CATS

By John Hamilton

I LOATHE cats because they are sleek and complacent like preachers and men who win the ladies they love.

I loathe cats because they yowl if you stumble over them in the dark when you are sneaking in at four in the morning.

I loathe cats because they lap up their milk noisily like ill-bred children.

I loathe cats because they are drab and slinking like my wife.

GOSSIP

By Allan Ransom

YOU perhaps didn't notice that things were at sixes and sevens with the Gilberts. You never were interested in people. I always have been. I flatter myself that I seldom miss a trick. It isn't love of scandal, but a singular curiosity that makes me dig into my friends' pasts and keep one eye on their presents.

Now between you and me it is my candid opinion that men love a bit of gossip just as well as women do, or even better perhaps. What do you think?

Before you went away all was serene in the Gilbert *ménage,* wasn't it? I remember we all thought she was handling him pretty well. When a young girl marries a man like Cass Gilbert everyone expects her to come a cropper.

You remember him, don't you? He was sinister enough to look at, with those drooping lids and that slow smile of his. If I had been a woman I wouldn't have trusted him around the corner. But they all did trust him and most of them fell in love with him. Funny, isn't it, how these artistic men, who are fifty per cent feminine, always appeal to women—especially the unhappy woman who hasn't much of anything to do and less to think about?

I'm not saying that men didn't like him. They did. He was a crackerjack shot, he rode well, he had a keen mind and a delightful sense of humor. We could understand everything but the poetic side of him—when he ceased to be the man-about-town and became the enigmatical faun, the piping Pan, the consciously pagan tempter, he got beyond our understanding.

And then Beth married him! Of all women, the serious, prosaic Beth! I can see why she loved him—he was an unknown quantity and lured her as the closed door lured Bluebeard's wife.

"I am going to have an exciting life," she told me, during their brief engagement. "Marrying Cass is like marrying a six-penny thriller." And again she said to me, rather fearfully, "Why is he in love with me? I'm not his sort of woman. He likes witty, perverse, exotic women, and I haven't even an imagination. And I am six feet tall and have a long Burne-Jones face; it doesn't seem consistent, Frank. He likes saucy little women—he has told me so."

I told her he loved her in spite of herself, and that seemed to amuse her. He dazzled her and frightened her, too. After they were married she treated him exactly as if he were an exhibition piece. She displayed him on all occasions. It was a bore to take her into dinner; she talked of him, at him, around him, about him to everyone. She thought she understood him and took the most infinite pains to explain him, to say, with a slight shrug of her beautiful shoulders, that alas he was "too much beloved by the women."

She was in love with him, tremendously in love with him. When he danced with other women she used to follow him with her eyes, whispering into her partner's reluctant ear that Cass was the most graceful dancer in New York.

If it had been a matter of mutual enthusiasm! But it wasn't. Every time she made love to him in public he flashed back a criticism of her. Her hair was poorly dressed, or her gown

was the wrong color, or why couldn't she learn to waltz like Miss Somebody or Other?

And for a long time, you remember, she seemed to be ecstatically happy. I suppose a man of his type can give a woman five minutes of his attention and make her happier than most of us could in ten years. Beth waited for Cass' rare minutes of affection, for his flashes of interest in her, like a dog waiting for a bone. If she had been more imaginative, she would have made sauce for the goose!

It was a long time after you had gone to China—oh, ten years probably—when the Brown girl turned up. You've never seen her, of course. She was about twenty years old, and the most stunning-looking creature I've ever seen. I've forgotten who introduced her, Grace probably, who has always supplied our set with stimulating outsiders. She designed fashions, I think. She was a nice girl—intelligent, eager, uncommonly level-headed, bright as a whip. Wherever she was there was laughter and enthusiasm. She had the trick of snapping a whip around your heels so that you jumped out of the old ruts you'd been running in. She lived off Gramercy Park somewhere alone, but she wasn't emancipated, Lord, no! She liked men and she liked clothes and she liked our atmosphere of ease and—well, good living.

And then she fell in love with Cass. I was there when it began. Freeman was at the piano playing a tango he had picked up in some cabaret. Cass went over to the Brown girl, dancing and holding out his hands to her, smiling his slow smile. She looked up at him and got out of her chair as if a magnet had drawn her into his arms. She was a reckless creature. She spread her fingers on his back, tipped back her head, met the shadows in his eyes full and unwavering—and they danced! They spun, hesitated, clung, dipped on one knee, locked like two sweethearts in that singularly unfaltering gaze. And there wasn't one of us in the room who didn't see at a glance that she was smitten. And not one of us, mind you, who wasn't sorry for her.

After that she couldn't keep it out of her face, out of her straightforward eyes. The worst part of it was we all dropped her from our scheme of things, as if she were to blame! It had to be done. We were an uncomfortable lot as long as she and Cass and Beth were together. But the poor dear was infatuated and all of us knew it. She disappeared from our sight, retired to her off-Gramercy studio, and was pursued there by the ardent and infatuated Cass. And we all knew that, too!

One day Cass put the case to Beth. He was tired of her, he told her. "I never really loved you. We have stuck it out all these years, but you bore me to death. I'm going to ask you to divorce me," he said.

"But I have all the money," Beth told him. "You'll never be happy if you have the responsibility of making money yourself. You know you'll only work spasmodically."

"You'll be unhappy!" Fancy the poor woman thinking of him at a moment like that! She felt she understood him and that no one else did. He was a spoiled creature. She anguished at the thought of him, deprived of their limousine, riding on a Fifth Avenue bus. How could he live on what he earned? Can you see her mental process?

She ordered her car as soon as he had left her and went straight to Gramercy Park. The Brown girl was in her studio, and opened the door herself to her rival. Beth took the surprised young creature in her arms and kissed her! "You poor dear," she said, with her cheek on the fresh cheek of the infatuated Brown. And then they both cried a great deal.

"I'm so awfully sorry for you," the girl said, patting Beth's broad back.

"Don't be sorry for me," Beth answered. "It's you I'm sorry for."

At that Beth told me the Brown girl drew away and wiped her eyes. "Sorry for me? Why?"

"Well," Beth answered, "if you are

going to marry Cass I pity you from the bottom of my heart."

"You're jealous," the Brown girl said, sneering a little.

"Jealous? Not at all. See here," Beth threw deep earnestness into her voice. "I'm fond of you. I've always admired you and liked you and respected you. You're a nice girl and a brave one. It's too bad you can't fall in love with a young man of your own age who will love and cherish you, instead of falling in love with my husband, who's forty and spoiled and selfish. You're imaginative, I'm not. I can put up with him when he gets temperamental. I'm rich, you're not. He has got into the habit of motors and steam yachts and his riding horse and two houses and his own valet. God knows, my dear, what kind of a life he'll lead you if you live in *this* kind of an atmosphere! Take away his background, and he's a very ordinary man. I've found out all about him in the last twelve years."

"Well, then," cried the Brown girl, taking deep breaths and getting two spots of red on her cheeks, "why not give him up? I love him. I see his worth. He is a very great artist. You and your silly set don't appreciate *that* side of him. I do. He's stifled. His soul—" and all the rest of it.

Beth sighed and got up to go. She told me she felt old for the first time in her life. "I hate to change things," she said, rather wearily. "Cass amuses me so. Life will be dull when he goes. And besides, my dear, our children adore him. Couldn't you, couldn't you give him up? You are going to have an awful time. He's a hard man to live up to—critical, fastidious, difficult!"

"Get out!" the Brown girl said, pointing to the door and trembling all over. "Get out before I lose control of myself. All I can say is—no wonder he is bored! God grant, I'll make him happy." And Beth went down the stairs and into the limousine. On the way up the Avenue she cried openly into her handkerchief.

I suppose you heard about the divorce and his re-marriage to the little Brown? The women sided with Cass and said that Beth never had understood him—and by the Lord Harry! how she *did* understand him! The men, of course, took Beth's part. He and his new wife dropped out of sight for three years. Occasionally one of us met him on the Avenue. He used to hurry along with a big portfolio under his arm—selling his illustrations, I suppose. He got rather seedy, bilious-looking, taciturn. It must have been hard on him to give up his old friends, to drop out of his clubs, to miss the season at Narragansett every summer. Hard on him! I for one was confoundedly sorry for him. Beth didn't marry again. I think she expected that some day he would come back, like the proverbial cat, to her doorstep.

But it didn't happen as she had dreamed it would. He didn't come back, but his wife did. One day a week ago Beth was surprised to find the little woman waiting for her when she came back from a matinée. She got up when Beth came into the room, ran to her, threw her arms around her neck, and burst into tears. Beth held her, staring over the top of her head with dry eyes, and, she told me, a heart that beat almost to suffocation. "Well," she said after a moment, "what has happened?"

And by the good Lord, what do you think had happened? The fascinating creature they both loved had got entangled with a model and wanted to marry her! "I've come to you to ask you to help me," Beth heard his wife say. "We've got to save him! He mustn't be allowed to ruin his life. You must help me! You must!"

Beth put her comforting arm around the wife's thin shoulders. "There, there," she said, perfectly happy at this opportunity, "we will do what we can. We'll save him between us. You've got to keep a tight hold on Cass. He's elusive, my dear—"

And that foolish, magnificent woman meant every word she said! . . . I thought it would amuse you!

THE SEASON IN SURVEY*

By George Jean Nathan

BY the soundest standards of criticism, the ten best plays of the theatrical season just concluded—regularly produced and done in the English language—were, in the order of their respective merit, the following:

1. The Gods of the Mountain (*Dunsany*).
2. The Golden Doom (*Dunsany*).
3. Magic (*Chesterton*).
4. The Master (*Bahr*).
5. Old Lady 31 (*Crothers and Forsslund*).
6. Great Catherine (*Shaw*).
7. King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior (*Dunsany*).
8. Trifles (*Glaspell*).
9. Good Gracious Annabelle (*Kummer*).
10. Our Betters (*Maugham*).

The ten best performances among the so-called unstarred or unfeatured actors were, in the order of merit, those presented by the following:

1. Reginald Barlow (*in "Old Lady 31"*).
2. José Ruben (*in the Washington Square Players' repertoire*).
3. John L. Shine (*in "The Morris Dance"*).
4. Rudolph Cameron (*in "Rich Man, Poor Man"*).
5. McKay Morris (*in the Portmanteau repertoire*).
6. Edgar Becman (*in the repertoire of the Théâtre Français*).
7. Fritz Leiber (*in "The Merchant of Venice."*)
   Opal Cooper (*in "The Rider of Dreams"*).
8. Courtney Foote (*in "Upstairs and Down"*).
9. Hans Unterkircher (*in the repertoire of the Irving Place Theatre*).
10. Henry Vogel (*in "Arms and the Girl"*).
    Eugene Lincoln (*in "Cocaine," of the Provincetown Players' repertoire*).

The ten best performances among the so-called unstarred or unfeatured actresses were, in the order of relative merit, those disclosed by the following:

1. Alice Lewisohn (*in "The Queen's Enemies" and "A Sunny Morning," of the Neighbourhood Playhouse repertoire*).
2. Chrystal Herne (*in "Our Betters"*).
3. Rose Coghlan (*in "Our Betters"*).
4. Mathilde Cottrelly (*in "Object Matrimony"*).
5. Lillian Greuze (*in "The Rubicon"*).
6. Eileen Hulan (*in "Grasshopper"*).
7. Florence Reed (*in "The Wanderer"*).
8. Fay Bainter (*in "The Willow Tree"*).
9. Inez Clough (*in "Simon the Cyrenian"*).
10. Beryl Mercer (*in "The Lodger"*).

In the composition of these records of acting, it is to be noted that the several admirable pantomimic performances disclosed in the presentation of "Pierrot the Prodigal"—the signally fine expositions of mute histrionism provided by Paul Clerget, Louis Gouget and Gabrielle Perrier—have not been figured with.

Performances of especial distinction, other than those chronicled in the table of the ten actors, were those of the following unstarred or unfeatured men: Roland Young in "Good Gracious Annabelle" and "A Successful Calamity," John Westley in "His Bridal Night," Lewis Edgard in "Out There," Arthur Hohl in "The Life of Man," Thomas Mitchell in "Under Sentence," Ronald Squire in "Gamblers All" and "Our Betters," Edwin Nicander in "Good Gracious Annabelle," Walter Ringham and Leslie Austen in "Great Catherine," Harry Ashford in "The Lodger," Robert Fischer in "Our Little Wife," Arthur Chesney in "Caroline," Warburton

*To May first, 1917.

Gamble in "Colonel Newcome," Norman Trevor in "A Kiss for Cinderella" and Edmond Lowe in "The Brat."

Performances of especial distinction, other than those set down in the cataloguing of the ten actresses, were those of the following unstarred or unfeatured women: Lynn Fontanne in "Out There," Mrs. Jacques Martin in "Shirley Kaye," Auriol Lee in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and "Pals First," Winifred Fraser in "Hush," May Galyer in "Old Lady 31," Ruth Findlay in "A Successful Calamity," Lola Fisher in "Good Gracious Annabelle," Grete Meyer in the Irving Place repertoire, Olive Wyndham in "The Knife," Eva Le Gallienne in "Mr. Lazarus," Florine Arnold in "Mr. Lazarus" and Maude Milton in "The Basker."

The best male star performance was that given by Arnold Daly in "The Master." The second best that of Henry Dixey in "Mr. Lazarus." The best female star performance was that of Margaret Illington in "Our Little Wife." The second best performance either that of Gertrude Kingston in "Great Catherine" or that of Emma Dunn in "Old Lady 31": I cannot make up my mind which takes precedence. Margaret Anglin's performance in "Caroline" and Laurette Taylor's in "Out There" were also of a thorough quality. Among the good performances of the unstarred or unfeatured women, there was none, however, so admirable as the remarkable performance given in the previous season in "The Devil's Garden" by Miss Geraldine O'Brien.

The best production of the season was that of Bahr's "The Poor Fool," directed by Edward Goodman of the Washington Square Players. The second best that of Clare Kummer's "A Successful Calamity," directed by Arthur Hopkins. The best exposition of stage illumination, and by all odds, was that revealed in the Washington Square Players' production of Andreyev's "Life of Man." This latter play I have omitted from my consideration of the best plays of the season for the reason that it was more or less privately presented and so was not fairly to be counted as among the regular presentations open to the public.

The negro plays of Ridgely Torrence, especially the play called "The Rider of Dreams," deserve honourable mention, though none of Mr. Torrence's works approaches to the high merit of a negro play written by Ernest Howard Culbertson, some of whose writings have been published in this magazine. This Culbertson play is probably the most faithful and acute transcription of the negro thus far made visible in our native dramatic writing.

Of the new American writers whose work was presented to the public for the first time during the past season, those of major promise would seem to be Susan Glaspell and Clare Kummer. By virtue of the quality of a portion of the first half of "Plots and Playwrights," I am tempted to include in this list Edward Massey. To this temptation, however, I shall not yet yield with so great a feeling of security as in the instance of, let us say, Miss Glaspell.

It is interesting to note that not one of the ten plays selected as the best of the season's offerings — and it seems rather certain that any other such catalogue cannot greatly vary from the one here deduced—that not one of the ten plays, as I say, was produced by a theatrical manager of the old, and now rapidly fading, order. These plays were presented either by amateurs, in the relative sense of the word, or by recent recruits to theatrical managership. The Dunsany plays, which might have been had by anyone for the asking, were left for presentation to Mr. Stuart Walker in his little Portmanteau Theater. "Magic" was produced by Mrs. Norman Hapgood and marked that lady's first theatrical effort. "The Master" was produced by the widow of the late Henry B. Harris upon the vigourous solicitation of Arnold Daly. "Old Lady 31" was put on by Lee Kugel, a newcomer. "Great Catherine" was exhibited in the Neighbourhood Playhouse, an amateur organization,

and "Trifles" under the wing of the young Washington Square Players. "Good Gracious Annabelle" was produced by Arthur Hopkins and "Our Betters" by John D. Williams, both of the younger and recently ordained producing order. It is to such amateurs, such experimenters and such young producing managers as these, that the theater must and will look for its future pulse and pressure.

From my list of plays there probably will be less dissent than from my lists of the best acting performances. Just as there are still critical gentlemen who write indignantly of this or that play that "it insults the intelligence" (as if the acted drama had aught to do with intellect; as if amusement were wedded to educational pursuits!), just so will there be critical gentlemen who will point out to me that Mr. or Miss So-and-So had an "actor-proof part" and consequently could not fail to give a good performance (as if any part could be proof against some actors!). But there the lists are and you may take them or leave them, as you will. They represent, at least to me, those performances among the unlithographed players that brought most greatly to the several roles a sense of feeling, thought, mood, distinction and manner and, finally and of course most important, a telling projection. I will doubtless be brought to task by certain professorial persons for having, among other things, elected as of first importance the work of a so-termed amateur actress. All I shall be able here to say in reply is that the amateur actress, in one of the roles designated, gave a performance twenty-fold more subtle and fascinating than did a professional actress, Miss Cathleen Nesbitt, who succeeded her when the production was brought to Broadway, and that this same amateur actress, in the second and widely different role chronicled, presented a performance quite remarkable for its versatility, its splendid sensitiveness and its beautiful poise. If this be the work of amateurs, then pray give me amateurs.

There is much nonsense in the appraisal of histrionism. I myself, in the years of my novitiate, negotiated my full share. I recall now, and not without a mellow shaking of the head, what an engaging ass I must, in those days, have been: how seriously and Johnsonianly I was wont to analyze this and that acting performance and read into such performances things that must have both astonished and set to chuckling any actor foolish enough to read what I wrote. But at least I got over the practice of such juicy bosh. One does, in time. And it is therefore possible that the critical gentlemen of some of the current gazettes, in say ten years . . . twenty years . . . thirty . . .

Those of our American commentators who still view acting as an art (forgetting that such great actors as Coquelin and Salvini themselves hooted at the notion) are the same who in their critical writings on drama and literature allude to the so-called Continental viewpoint under the belief that the term signifies only something more or less directly related to indiscriminate venery. Upon the fine artists in musical composition, everyone agrees. Upon the fine artists in the interpretation of these compositions, everyone agrees. Upon the artists in paint and in marble and in drama and in literature, everyone agrees. If acting is an art, why cannot the supposed authorities similarly agree? Why the Duse-yes, Bernhardt-no, Bernhardt-yes, Duse-no pother? Why the mess over Mounet-Sully? Why the debates over Mansfield? Why the endless arguments over the Sicilian Aguglia? Why, in England, the yes and no over Beerbohm Tree? In Germany, over Alexander Moissi? In America, over Arnold Daly? If acting is an art, where the standards? And why is only Salvini greeted in the unanimous affirmative?

No one doubts that Beethoven and Brahms, that Kreisler and Hambourg, that Rembrandt and Rubens, that Michelangelo and Mercié, that Ibsen and Hauptmann, that Shakespeare and Con-

rad were and are artists. Why is there no unanimous agreement upon the high priests of histrionism? Plainly enough, for the same reason that there is no unanimous agreement upon race horses, prize fighters, ball players, one-step dancers or different brews of beer. Why, otherwise, no greater concurrence in the appraisals of Mrs. Fiske, of Madame Simone (the French critics hold her a first-rate artist where the Anglo-Saxon critics merely snicker), of Emmanuel Reicher (the German critics hold him a great actor; the American critics refuse to accept him), of even Sam Sothern (the British critics consider him an artist; the native critics consider him but a melancholious pantaloon)?

The truth is not difficult of plumbing. Art has the quality of universality; acting is more or less a thing sectional. Madame Morizumi is regarded as the greatest artist of the Japanese stage. She is venerated by the Japanese. In France or Germany or England or America her methods would, it is safe to assume, be laughed at. On the other hand, a critic and scholar lately attached to the Japanese embassy in Washington once assured me that in his estimation Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet was, I quote his words, "as bad an example of acting as gives your American actors Mr. Robert Mantell and Mr. John E. Kellerd." The Hamlet of the celebrated Russian actor Glagolin would seem as poor a Hamlet to Western audiences as the Hamlet of E. H. Sothern would doubtless seem to Eastern. Dalmatoff's Quex won the highest and soundest critical praise of Petrograd. Yet it is recorded that a British critic who witnessed the actor's performance, and who further confessed that he had never seen Hare in the role and was so not prejudiced, and yet it is recorded that this critic observed that never had he seen a poorer performance of any role!

Acting is a thing almost as local as tennis, golf, baseball or any other sport. It is a pastime and, as such, open to local prejudices, tastes and predilections. The jury that sits in judgment upon it is like unto a cosmopolitan jury that sits upon woman's beauty: a jury that decides according to each of its twelve separate and divergent national standards. The world, without exception, recognizes the Fifth Symphony to be a great work of art. In all probability the greatest acting performance of more modern times was the performance of the central role in Sudermann's "Heimat" by Eleonora Duse. And yet several of the leading British critics asserted that Duse had not so much as touched the role—and yet the French critics to a man asserted that the performance could not be compared with that of Bernhardt—and yet the Italian and Spanish critics asserted that the performance of Bernhardt could not be compared with that of Duse—and yet a practised and well educated and thoroughly trained Scandinavian critic, stage director and actor, August Lindberg, if I do not forget his name, asserted that *neither* Duse nor Bernhardt had given a proper, an authentic, interpretation of the role!

While, of course, it is perfectly true that a work of art is often, and may often, be debated, and eloquently, on both its sides, it is yet scarcely conceivable that the master works of an art, if they be debated at all, be not debated eventually to a conclusion: a conclusion establishing them in their proper place and to their proper stature and estate. That this conclusion is never reached in the matter of acting and acting performances is pertinent, significant. No more, indeed, is the conclusion ever reached in the argument over the putting of Worcestershire sauce in soup or over the wearing of a white waistcoat with a dinner jacket. Like the three-card monte game, it can't be done.

Réjane, an accomplished actress, confessed to a pinch of strong smelling salts in her 'kerchief when asked by a friend how she achieved her dramatic flow of tears. The dramatist creates; it is impertinence for the actor to attempt to usurp for himself the dramatist's right—this, the word of Coque-

lin. Zacconi, the illustrious Italian actor, once remarked that the best actor was that actor who remained constantly mindful of the prejudices of his audiences and played to those prejudices, Enrique Borras, the leading actor of the Comedia Theater of Madrid, has whispered it that he cannot reproduce laughter on the stage unless he bethinks him at the relevant moment of the picture of a fat gentleman in a green suit falling down stairs. D. W. Griffith, the motion picture director, in his early training of Mary Pickford used to employ some dozen or so flappers to rehearse in turn the scenes Miss Pickford was subsequently to play and from each of these flappers would appropriate for and visit upon Miss Pickford some effective girlish trick or cunning bit of business so that Miss Pickford, when finally she played the scene, became a composite of the prettiest little mannerisms of the experimental twelve. And Mae Marsh was made by the same process. . . . Well, well, it may be an art after all, may acting, but so then, too, by the same process of ratiocination, may be the laying of marquetry floors, the making of fine mince pies and the training of runners for the hundred-yard dash. . . .

To return to the table of plays. My review in these pages of Barrie's "A Kiss for Cinderella" at the time of its initial presentation will account sufficiently for the omission of that play, an omission that may possibly here and there brew a remark. Of Miss Kummer's "Good Gracious Annabelle" and "A Successful Calamity," the former is, of course and by all odds, the more authentic piece of dramatic composition. The latter, due to the exceptionally polished production given it by Mr. Hopkins and its uncommonly deft interpretation, provides a very agreeable theatrical evening, but the manuscript itself is in no wise consequent.

An amusing circumstance connected with the production of "A Successful Calamity" has been the unanimous critical excitement over the unfailing good manners of that production. All that seems necessary to persuade the gazetteers that a play and production are well-mannered is for the producer to direct that the play be enacted in a very slow and deliberate tempo, that the actors speak softly and that the chairs on the stage be upholstered in some colour other than red or green. While it is entirely true that Mr. Hopkins' production is as attractive a production as one has seen in the theater here in America or abroad, it is quite equally true that the current gushing over its good manners has about it not a little of the comic. Good manners or bad manners do not in the least interest me personally. But while the subject is before us one may call attention to the circumstance that it is not customary in well-conducted homes (1) for the butler to pound the dressing gong as if he were announcing lunch time at a jerkwater railroad station; (2) for the master to have his smoking-jacket hanging in readiness on the hat-rack in the main hallway; (3) for a telephone and a filled decanter and tray of wineglasses to be placed in the reception room; (4) for the maid to wear a décolleté silk dress and have her fingers covered with diamond rings; (5) for children to remain seated when an adult guest enters the room . . . These, but a few casually recalled instances of the signally bad manners of what my colleagues, in "A Successful Calamity," have found to be a play of faultless deportment.

I have included Maugham's "Our Betters" in the tenth place in the table not particularly because it belongs in a catalogue of exceptionally meritorious plays—it is, in good truth, largely a dramatic so-so—but because no other play of the season seems, in my estimation, to be better suited to take its place in the catalogue. Were the third act of Mr. Hartley Manners' "Out There" not so exceeding shabby a thing, this play might well deserve a record in the roll, for the first and, more especially, the second acts of the play are of a genuine merit, a merit not even remotely promised in their author's previous works. In "Out There," Mr. Manners

has done much that is engaging and his middle act, standing alone, is one of the best pieces of dramatic writing that the season has disclosed. It is amusing to think what the critical professors would have written of "Out There" had it been its author's first effort at stage composition. With no plot in the Times Square sense of the word, with scarcely any "action" or scarcely anything else prescribed by the professors as essential in the manufacture of a play, it seems not unlikely that had the play been the author's first work, numerous journals of the following morning and certain magazines of the following month would have explained in detail that the play, while entertaining, was clearly the work of one who did not understand the stage and needed to apply himself more closely to a study of its requirements. It was well for Mr. Manners that he had written the ritualized piffle called "Peg o' My Heart" and "The Harp of Life" before writing the respectable and honourable composition called "Out There." Had I been in the gentleman's place, however, I doubt that I could have resisted the temptation to sign "Out There" with a pseudonym and so stand incognito on the sidelines and watch the critical professors make amiable fools of themselves.

The ten-scened Russian drama "Nju" (the "j" is silent, as in Sherry's), with which the Messrs. Urban and Ordynski inaugurated their metropolitan season as producers, was a triviality tediously told: a syllable in ten words. The author, Dymow, essaying to do with the life of love what his brother Slav, Andreyev, did with the life of man, found the theme altogether too big for him and the result was a circuitous, vague and darksome meandering and maundering. Inasmuch as it was therefore difficult to decipher what the play was about or what it meant, certain good folk, following the familiar procedure in the case of such Russian dramaturgy, held that this dubiousness and bepuzzlement must be more or less related to genius and that, therefore, "Nju" possessed an "intangible something," a "glimmer of something," an "eerie quality," that demanded that it be considered seriously as a piece of dramatic literature. To much of this Russian literature there is a bouncing fetch, a buxom hoax. The American reading public has been appropriately gullible. But it may one of these days begin to realize that the country of Tolstoi, Turgenev, Dostoievski, Tchekoff and Andreyev may at the same time have its Charles Rann Kennedys, its George V. Hobarts and its Harold Bell Wrights. It is but fair to the author of "Nju," however, to record that his manuscript in the local presentation was not allowed to remain in the form in which it was originally presented on the Continent, but was vigorously deodorized for the native nostril. It is but fair to the native nostril, however, to record in turn that the author's original manuscript was not particularly superior to that locally presented.

The plays uncurtained during the season by the amateur organization calling itself The Provincetown Players lead one to look to this group for some interesting future work. In addition to Pendleton King's praiseworthy little drama "Cocaine," a satirical burlesque by Rita Wellman called "Barbarians" (somewhat like the play "Us Barbarians," by Max Simon, done the year previous in Irving Place), together with little plays by Harry Kemp, Susan Glaspell and others, revealed a mind here for wit, viewpoint and nimble thinking. Not even the humblest of the little pieces but surpassed at every point such Broadway jazbo as Horace Annesley Vachell's "Case of Lady Camber" with its chronic *mots:* (1) "You are no better than a woman of the streets!", (2) "You came to me with his kisses still warm on your lips!", and (3) "She was *everything* to me, but I was *nothing* to her" . . .

The humour of the Provincetown plays is quick, spontaneous. The efforts of such as Vachell to be light are akin to the efforts of a frozen gas jet.

Objection will be raised by some to

my giving precedence, in the table of the ten best plays, to certain one-act plays over certain longer plays, and it will be argued eloquently that since the one-act form is less difficult than the longer form, an appraiser of the relative importance of a number of dramatic presentations would do well to bear this fact in mind. This, like many of its allied contentions, is for the most part all too absurd. It is quite obvious, of course, that it is a very much easier thing to write a one-act play like one of Alfred Sutro's than a three-act play like one of Alfred Sutro's, but it is of course quite equally obvious that it is a much easier thing to write a three-act play like one of Alfred Sutro's than a one-act play like one of Lord Dunsany's. The critic who appraises a play by its length is the species of individual who appraises a dinner by the number of its courses or a shirt by the liberalness of the portion that one tucks into one's trousers. To judge a work of art by its length is to believe Schnitzler's "Professor Bernhardi" a finer thing than Schnitzler's "Christmas Present," Puccini's "Girl of the Golden West" a more lovely thing than Brahms' piano concerto in B flat major, or Rembrandt's "Sortie of the Company of Frans Banning Cock" a meaner work than the cyclorama of the Battle of Lookout Mountain.

The delusion that a one-act play is, by reason of its being a one-act play, a less important creation than a three-act play is a delusion as persistent as that other critical delusion which has to do with the lack of poetry in Japanese plays written by Occidentals. Let an Occidental compose some such play as "The Willow Tree" and even so discerning a theatrical reviewer as Mr. Channing Pollock will find much in it to be cross with, will lament the unconsonant Western prose of it and the absence in it of congruous Japanese melody, will write comparatively of it that in it "not only is there no poetry, but, in the employment of a device affording unusual opportunities, there is no original thought, no philosophic comment upon life, no real satire and very little humour." Granting that all this may be quite true, it remains that there is an equal absence of poetry, original thought, philosophic comment upon life, real satire and humour in the Japanese plays by Orientals. The notion that the drama of Japan is a drama of rare fancy and lovely word music is a notion ill-founded. And while this, true enough, may not excuse the Occidental when he sets himself to the composition of a Japanese play, it is yet manifestly unfair to register against the Occidental the complaint that his play misses something in the real Japanese drama that the real Japanese drama does not itself possess.

A careful reading of the plays of the classical stage of Japan (see Marie Stopes' "Plays of Old Japan"; Ezra Pound's notes on Fenollosa and the Noh; etc.) reveals no more poetry, as you will discover for yourself, than the American-Japanese play "The Willow Tree." (The criticism of the latter play is not on this point, but rather that it professes loudly to be a fantasy of the Japan of Hearn and Loti and is in actuality rather a fantasy of the Japan of Minnie Ashley and Julia Sanderson, of the Japan of Lionel Monckton and Leslie Stuart.) The Messrs. Benrimo and Rhodes are less deficient in the matter of poetry than in the matter of catching the spirit of the Japanese dramaturgy. For, as I have said, a survey of such things as "Sandaihagi," "Kayoi Komachi," "Shojo," "Kumasaka" and the like discloses, by way of beautiful imagery, by way of musical simile and mellow metaphor, a score of drab tones for one such wistful and dulcet singing as "like the bell of a country town 'neath the nightfall" (*Suma Genji*), a score and more of flat and stereotyped "they are piled like the mountains" (*Tamura*) for one such bit as that describing the withering woman Ono (*Sotoba Komachi*) "she is like a dull moon that fades in the dawn's grip."

So far as philosophy is concerned, there is just as much in "The Willow Tree" as you will encounter in any of

the authentic Japanese plays. And if there is no satire nor humour in the former, I assure you there is even less in the latter.

A word or two, in conclusion, on some of the other plays which have been divulged since my last writing in this place.

At the New Amsterdam, Mr. Herbert Tree has been appearing in a play by Michael Morton entitled "Colonel Newcome." At the Belasco, a play by John Meehan entitled "The Very Minute" has been appearing in Mr. Arnold Daly. Both the *opera* are dismal businesses. The former purports to be a dramatization of Thackeray's novel, "The Newcomes," but is in actuality little more than a re-dramatization of Sydney Grundy's mildewed "Marriage of Convenience" with the actors named after the Thackeray characters. The latter is a reduction of the intentional absurdities of Hoyt's "A Temperance Town" to the unintentional absurdities of a high-flown prohibition tract in which the author, desirous of exhibiting himself in the light of a brilliant philosopher but unable to think up anything brilliant to say, resorts to the old theatrical trick of trying to confound criticism by putting the very best things he is able to think of in the mouth of the hero and then, upon their being spoken by the hero, causing another character to observe that the aforesaid hero talks like a freshman. Daly is an excellent actor, the best we have in this country. It is a pity to see him and his agreeable obstreperousness wasted on such nonsense. His performance is an admirable one, but it is as hapless for an expert actor like Daly to give an admirable performance of such a paltry role as it would be for a natation expert like Annette Kellermann to give an admirable performance of swimming across a bath-tub.

At the Liberty, a soggy Teutonic adaptation by Mr. Frank Mandel given the title "Bosom Friends." At the new Bijou, a skilful Grand Guignol melodrama by Mr. Eugene Walter called "The Knife": an inflammatory duologue on white slavery and vivisection, in which one of the things vivisected is the English language. At the Republic, the juicy sniffle-siphon "Peter Ibbetson," the late John Raphael's dramatization of Du Maurier's novel. At the Maxine Elliott, at least as I write, "Grasshopper," an adaptation by Padraic Colum and Mrs. F. E. Washburn Freund of a play by Keyserling who, according to the incorrigible *Times*, is a Russian playwright but who, of course, is none other than the well-known E. von Keyserling, German poet-dramatist of the soil, a writer closely identified with such stage writers on German peasant life as Brix, Dreyer, Michel and Greinz. The play from which "Grasshopper" was made was originally presented in the Residenz-Theater of Munich. What with this turning of a play on the German peasantry into a play on the Irish peasantry by the simple expedient of changing "fräulein" to "colleen" and shifting the scene from Bückeburg to Ballyrane, we may next look forward to seeing Ridgely Torrence's negro play, "Granny Maumee" transformed into a Swedish play by the simple means of starring Miss Martha Hedman in the leading role.

LA CHAINE

By Marguerite Berthet

UN étroit et long souterrain. D'une sorte de meurtrière très haute, laissant deviner l'épaisseur des murailles, filtre une vague lueur. Tout au fond, au mur faisant face à la porte, un anneau de fer est scellé. De cet anneau part une chaîne divisée, à l'autre extrémité, en chaînons dont les derniers enserrent les pieds et les poings d'un homme. Est-ce un homme, cet être aux yeux creux, au corps décharné, aux cheveux tombant, broussailleux, sur les épaules? Il rampe, s'étire, allonge le bras, tend la chaîne à la rompre, et trace du bracelet de fer une ligne sur le sol. Puis sa main recule, il tâtonne dans l'obscurité; ses doigts ont retrouvé une trace semblable, il mesure avec la main leur distance, puis il s'arrête et paraît se livrer à de profonds calculs.

Pour une faute commise autrefois (il y a si longtemps qu'il l'a oubliée, et ses juges aussi), Cithilâ a été condamné au supplice du souterrain. Il en sortira lorsque, du bracelet de fer qui enserre son poing, il pourra frapper à la porte, à l'autre bout du souterrain. Tous les ans, solennellement, on vient river un nouvel anneau à la chaîne qui, ainsi, régulièrement, s'allonge, mais s'alourdit.

Elle est si lourde déjà qu'il ne peut plus la soulever. Il se traîne et rampe. Ses bras sont meurtris, ses cheveux blanchis; ses yeux se sont éteints. Une seule chose occupe sa pensée: l'heure de la délivrance. Il attend, fébrile, le moment, pourtant douloureux, où l'on scelle le nouvel anneau. Il mesure l'allongement; il se livre à des calculs compliqués pour trouver combien d'années lui restent encore; mais, comme il ne peut évaluer exactement la longueur du souterrain, il passe par des alternatives d'espérance et d'angoisse, et il recommence, indéfiniment, le même problème.

. . . Cependant, le jour vint où le bracelet de fer put heurter à la porte, et, selon la loi, la porte s'ouvrit, et la chaîne tomba.

Le prisonnier était libre.

Cithilâ n'était plus qu'une ombre; il ne savait plus se servir de ses membres endoloris; ses yeux, à demi-morts, éblouis par le jour, se fermèrent. Il se traîna, en rampant, jusqu'à la sortie et, de là, gagna une petite place à l'ombre des murs, où il s'étendit.

Un passant charitable, croyant voir un bixou aveugle, lui jeta une pièce de monnaie. Il la palpa, la flaira, la mordit; puis, n'en retrouvant plus l'usage, il l'abandonna.

Une femme, qui portait à la vente des galettes de riz, le prit pour un pèlerin accomplissant quelque vœu; elle lui mit en mains une des galettes, qu'il avala gloutonnement.

Tout le jour, il resta là, se glissant et tournant avec l'ombre de la prison. Cependant il était visiblement préoccupé. On le voyait parfois s'étendre, agiter le bras, puis chercher, comme si quelque chose lui manquait. Vers le soir, sa figure s'éclaira: sans doute, il avait trouvé. Il se dirigea, rampant toujours, vers l'entrée de la prison.

—N'est-ce point toi, à qui on a rendu la liberté ce matin? demanda le garde. Que te faut-il encore?

Alors, dans un suprême effort, rassemblant tout ce qui lui restait d'énergie pour exprimer ce qu'il avait eu tant de peine à se formuler à lui-même:

—Ma chaîne, supplia-t-il.

THE PLAGUE OF BOOKS

By H. L Mencken

§ 1.

WHEN, in the year ten of this damndest of centuries, there appeared a book by a college professor in which it was openly admitted that Mark Twain was a greater writer than Oliver Wendell Holmes, I hymned the prodigy as one full of exhilarating portents and anointed the good professor himself with lavish cataracts of cocoa butter, vaseline, neats' foot oil and curve grease. His name was William Lyon Phelps, A.B., A.M., Ph.D.; he was Lampson professor of English language and literature in Yale College. I hailed him as the first herald of the academic enlightenment, the bold forerunner of a new renaissance, the pioneer of intelligence in the professorial chair. Let me now, with a wry face, withdraw and swallow the great bulk of those unguents. Let me take back and purge myself with those caressing pomades. Down, down they go! I was honest, brethren, but I was somehow wrong. The Phelps of 1917 has gone back to orthodoxy and the stale fruits of the scholastic grove. A mugwump and iconoclast no longer, he now chants the standard liturgy of Harvard and of Yale, of Princeton and of Columbia, of literary embalmers and of his witless order, of heavy platitude and of pious bosh. His book of 1910, "Essays on Modern Novelists," had novelty and the breath of life in it; there was more than one show of independence in its judgments; it rang clear. His book of 1917, "The Advance of the English Novel" (*Dodd-Mead*), is a flat reboiling of old respectabilities, a hack job for literary ladies and college boys, a mass of mush. It might have been written by Hamilton Wright Mabie or Edwin Markham, even by Brander Matthews, even by that fair Ella (I forget her last name) who interprets literature to the women's clubs out in Chicago. It might have run serially through the paleozoic columns of the Boston *Transcript;* one can even imagine it following Dr. Mabie's "White List of Books" in the *Ladies' Home Journal.* In it the estimable professor goes back to the tasteless herbs of his New England youth; once more he is the pedagogue who edited "The Poetry and Prose of Thomas Gray" and "The Best Plays of Chapman" for sweating and god-forsaken school-boys. In it, after that memorable aberration at forty year, he returns to his drowsy bath in the academic Lethe, there to await the last, sad bugle-call.

Et tu quoque, my dear Mon Chair! . . . Do I bawl and snuffle? Do I call the professor names? Then consider what a blow has found my ribs. For seven years I nursed this serpent. For seven years I cried him up as one who had drunk at college pumps and yet lived. For seven years, in season and out of season, I kept a spotlight on him, displaying him to the nobility and gentry as a college professor shaken free of the class-room, a pundit emancipated from superstition, the White Hope of the seminaries. And now he turns upon me and sets fire to the deck beneath my feet. Now he adopts the criteria of the Literary Supplement of the New York *Times.* Now he is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of Harvard and the *Nation.* . . . I assume the black cap and proceed to is-

sue judgment upon him in due form of law. May his work be tagged and chewed up for posterity, when his time comes to die, by his successor as Lampson professor of English at Yale. May his books be adopted as texts in all the fresh-water colleges west of the Wabash, and may generations of plowboys learn to venerate him between Dr. Robertson Nichol, the Methodist Taine, and Dr. Mabie, the Hannah More of Summit, N. J. May he find no books to read in the purgatory of professors —a deep and roaring hole, I surely hope —save the novels of James Fenimore Cooper and the critical works of Paul Elmer More. May he live to see his verdicts solemnly accepted by readers of books, and O. Henry put above Frank Norris, and Owen Wister above Theodore Dreiser, and Charles D. Stewart invested with the late toga of Mark Twain, and W. J. Locke revered as a great Christian moralist. To the calaboose, Mr. Catchpoll! Out, out! . . .

In detail, it is hard to deal with this curiously hollow and uninspired book. It proceeds upon no intelligible plan; it is incoherent and uninforming; it is prejudiced and ignorant; its valuations are often preposterous, and sometimes almost fabulous. What is one to think of a critic who devotes a whole page to a discussion of H. G. Wells's "The Wife of Sir Isaac Harmon," and then fails to mention "The New Machiavelli" at all? Of one who hails Mrs. W. K. Clifford's "Love Letters of a Worldly Woman" as a "masterpiece," and then forgets to name a single work by Hugh Walpole, J. S. Beresford or W. L. George? Of one who describes O. Henry as a "genius" who will have "abiding fame," and then rigorously avoids any mention of Dreiser, or Robert Grant, or Thomas Nelson Page? Of one who speaks seriously of the "highest reaches" of the "art" of Henry Bordeaux, the French Harold Bell Wright? Of one who gravely accepts General Lew Wallace as a first-rate novelist? Of one who signs his name to the doctrine that "the American novelist most worthy to fill the particular vacancy caused by the death of Mark Twain is Charles D. Stewart"—the author of a volume of vaudeville anecdotes called "Finerty of the Sandhouse"? Of one who—but there is no need to multiply examples. A few such judgments are sufficient. Worse, they are accompanied by a lot of puerile moralizing, an endless dallying with the notion that the aim of art is to perfume and sweeten the beholder. The Encyclopedia Britannica's astounding discovery that "A Mummer's Wife" is a tract against gambling is gone one better by the discovery that "Esther Waters" has "a nobly ethical tone" and makes the reader "feel a moral stimulation." (God help poor old Moore! Imagine the *Stammvater* of the literature of Texas as an evangelist!) Samuel Butler's "The Way of All Flesh," we are told, will be "of real service to Christianity." (O, shades, liver and lights of Shaw!) Joseph Conrad's "The Point of Honor" is "an allegory of the struggle between good and evil, with the triumph of good." W. J. Locke, since "The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne," has been converted to Christianity, and is "an ethical philosopher," and his "Simon the Jester" is "illumined with deep religious feeling" . . . Pish, tartuffery, cant! It reaches its climax in a passage on Zola. "He was found, in the morning, lying half out of bed, his face on the floor buried in his own vomit. . . . An excellent illustration of the limits of his art." . . . Ah, the sweet, the savory, the "moral" Puritan!

Enough, and too much! What must the English think when they read contemporary American criticism—such piffle as Mabie's pious prattle for high-school girls, More's staggeringly ignorant "criticism" of Nietzsche, the late "History of American Literature Since 1870," by Professor Fred Lewis Pattee, the reviews in such journals as the *Times* and the *Outlook*, such lame and pointless stuff as is in Dr. Phelps's present volume? One of the amusing characteristics of the books by pro-

fessors is their unanimous failure to so much as mention Dreiser. The thing, indeed, takes on the aspect of an organized movement; the fellow becomes a sort of bugaboo to the rev. pundits, to be put into Coventry with Beelzebub. It will be curious to see how long this moral exile lasts. Already the British violate its terms. The London *Academy*, taking the professors from the rear, calls "Sister Carrie" the greatest of American novels. The *Fortnightly*, the *Spectator*, the *Saturday Review* and the *Athenaeum* heap praises upon its successors. Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells, W. J. Locke, Frank Harris and others of their kidney venture upon the atrocity of putting Dreiser above Howells—a blasphemy, but by experts, ladies, by experts! Over all roars the voice of Theodore Watts-Dunton, surely a respectable man! . . . Let us reserve our snickers until the day the first drover of rah-rah boys swallows the bilious Indianan, as Dr. Phelps swallowed old Mark in 1910. Let us see what university sends its "professor of English language and literature" to do that noxious job. Let us stay our guffaws a bit longer. . . .

A sad, sad lot, these Yankee tasters of beautiful letters—but stay! A few months ago, taking the air in Fifth avenue, I dropped into one of the stores given over to marked-down books. On the 50-cent counter reposed a volume entitled "The Spirit of American Literature," by John Macy (*Doubleday-Page*). The name of this Macy was known to me; I had received reliable reports from my Boston agents that he was a man of sense. Nevertheless, his publishers had not thought it worth while to send me his book when it was published in 1913, and it now reposed upon the bargain counter, among a lot of other forlorn "remainders." I bought it, steered for Lüchow's, sent Gustav for a *seidel* of Hoboken malt, and inquired within. . . . What I found was a first-class book of criticism, a book sparkling with the ideas of a well-read and intelligent man, a book by a genuine lover of books, a true joy and delight. Not a trace of academic fustian! Not a line of flapdoodle! Not a hint of the college professor! Here was sharp and shrewd judgment. Here was clear and independent thinking. Here was enthusiasm unashamed and contempt undisguised. Here, above all, was sound writing—a graceful flow of sentences, a stock of new phrases, a piquant and intriguing style. No book of criticism that I have read in ten years has given me more pleasure. No book has set my own notions to bubbling more furiously. None has left me with a more vivid sense of vigorous and worthwhile intellectual experience. . . . I recommend it to you without qualification. Macy is the antidote to the pedagogues. He will be discovered, I daresay, in fifteen or twenty years. But once discovered, he will not be quickly forgotten.

II

HAVE I laid an interdict upon the professors, damning them all, one and every, in the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress? Then let me except and apologize to Prof. Ludwig Lewisohn, A.M., Litt.D., second in command of a department in the Ohio State University at Columbus. The syndics of the Ohio State University had better keep a watchful eye upon this Lewisohn; he has written two or three very excellent books, and before long there will be academic White Slave traders on his trail, seeking to lure him to some larger seminary, and the fatter honoraria thereof. His volume on "The Modern Drama," published in 1915, is the sanest and most illuminating discussion of dramatic currents since Ibsen in the language. And his new book, "The Spirit of Modern German Literature" (*Huebsch*), sweeps a wide field with so sure and practised a glance that every hillock and hollow of it is measured at once. A small book, even a meagre book, but a book packed full of sharp and sound criticism. With its subject matter I profess a good deal

more than the average college professor's acquaintance; I have written a whole book upon one small sub-division of it, and at least five kilometres of articles upon other parts. But I had not read twenty pages of Lewisohn before I saw clearly that this was a man who knew infinitely more about it than I did, and, what is more, a man who had the rare faculty of reducing his vast knowledge to order and simplicity, and of making it not only clear, but also interesting. His English style, in truth, is a model of transparent and dignified writing; he says what he has to say with the utmost directness and clarity. . . . But surely this is not his last word upon the subject. He must do the thing over, and at length; he must make a thorough job of it. One of the chief of the worth-while enterprises after the wounds of the war are bound up will be that of interpreting the people on one side to the people on the other. In particular, the Germans and the Americans must be made to put away their present prejudices and stupidities, and to see each other as they really are—as the only two nations whose future looms up as magnificently as their past. We err in judging the Germans by their jingoes, by their Junkers and by the fifth-rate *bourgeois* who constitute their chief contribution to our own population. And the Germans err in judging us by our political mountebanks, our newspapers and our social pushers. What is durable, and genuine, and profound, and significant in each nation is concealed from the other. Think of the childish gabble that goes on in the United States about Nietzsche—or, to adopt the American spelling, Nitsche, Nietzshe or Neitzshy! And think how the Germans would open their eyes if the Boston Symphony Orchestra should play in the Gewandhaus! . . .

The remaining books of criticism interest me less. "Pencraft," by William Watson (*Lane*), is no more than the mooning of a bad poet. I am unable to discern any ideas in it. Its one coherent contribution to criticism is a proposal to "divide literature into three kinds or orders, and to call them the cantative, the scriptive and the loquitive." What we have here, of course, is no more than a fresh outbreak of the old labelling mania, so dear to *MM. les professeurs*. A new set of tags, and presto! we have a new theory, a new armament of criteria, a new philosophy! With all due respect to an honest jingler, Poosh! . . . As for "How to Read," by J. B. Kerfoot (*Houghton-Miffiin*), my much-esteemed colleague on *Life*, the fault of it is that it takes too many words to state a few sound but in no wise remarkable ideas. What Dr. Kerfoot says is always perfectly true, but he supports it with such an excess of elaborate illustration and example that he is often lost in his own storm of words. As an article, or even as a pamphlet, his volume would have been capital. But perhaps I here lose sight of his chief purpose, which was plainly to engage and educate the reader who has never given any thought to the process of reading at all. This reader, perhaps, needs all that elaboration of explanation, and that hortatory note no less. At worst, Kerfoot shows plainly that he has given sober and profitable thought to his business, and that his competent reviewing of books, for long so popular a feature of *Life*, is undertaken seriously, and with a correct understanding of its principles. Why doesn't he print a book of his reviews? It would be shrewd, succinct, unbiased, discreet and highly profitable.

III

As it remained for Dr. Frank J. Wilstach to write the first usable dictionare of similes in English (I reviewed it in high, astounding terms in this place last December), so it remained for his brother, Dr. Paul Wilstach, to write the first intelligible book on Mount Vernon, a place so charming that it is surprising it has not attracted a whole brigade of authors. Frank is the more deep and learned of the Wilstachii; it took him twenty-five years to hatch his tome of similes; for almost a genera-

tion he brooded upon it in Pullman cars, on the station platforms of remote hamlets, and in the gaudy bridal chambers of hinterland hotels. A work of illimitable industry, of huge fixity of purpose, of endless value to the literati. The name of Wilstach is embalmed in amber. Paul, the younger brother, has tackled easier jobs, but done them all well. His *opi* include five or six plays, the best life of Richard Mansfield, and many ingenious critical compositions. It was he, I believe, who first prepared a literary map of the United States, showing the fat cluster of genii in the vicinity of La Fayette, Ind., the seat of the Wilstach family, the site of Schloss Wilstachburg, and the capital of the bozart in These States. His book on Mount Vernon is characteristically thorough and entertaining. Into it he has got everything about the noble old estate that is worth knowing, and particularly everything that the writers of guidebooks leave out.

Have you ever been there? If not, you have missed the most charming pilgrimage that America offers. Don't make the trip down from Washington by trolley; it is abominable. And don't make it by boat; you will miss Alexandria. Hire a motor-car and go in state, as befits a patriot making a journey of piety to the one indubitable national shrine. Begin at the Washington monument, proceed along the lovely sweep of the Speedway, cross the long bridge, and then plunge into Virginia. Virginia is a state of poor white trash and bad roads, but the road to Mount Vernon is an exception, for it was built by Uncle Sam for military purposes, and a multitude of big army signs, designed to keep the artillery from wandering off into the swamps, point the way clearly. Five or six miles of dips and curves, and you are at Alexandria, a sleepy old Southern town that is still struggling out of the eighteenth century. I know of no more charming one north of Charleston, save only Annapolis. On the main streets, true enough, one sees signs of a garish, amateurish sort of progress, but in the side streets the ancient colonial houses still stand in all their dignity of faded brick, and there are great trees along the kerbings, and nigger boys play marbles in the gutters, and fat old wenches, turbaned as in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," swap Baptist scandal over the rickety yard-rails. Alexandria has age; it has distinction; it has the thing vaguely called atmosphere. More, it has reserve and dignity; it seems to be a town of ladies and gentlemen. Old George was there often in his day. He passed through a dozen times a year, and went to church there and to dances, and sometimes took aboard a military cargo of strong waters, and once, when the hostess of the evening offered tea, he made a satirical note of it in his diary, and no doubt pleaded his wounds and albuminuria the next time he was invited. Imagine him in the Virginia of today—a Paradise of tin-pot evangelists, "dry" and "pure," a commonwealth run by cads!

Once out of Alexandria, there is a long bridge to cross, and then one plunges into the pleasant Virginia countryside, and goes up and down a long series of hills, with now and then a gorgeous glimpse of the Potomac to the left. The river, between Washington and Mount Vernon, must be at least a mile wide. At all events, there is a majestic sweep to it, and light mists float upon it, particularly in the morning, and make it seem grand and faraway, even when one is directly before it. Ten or twelve miles of this—and a sudden turn brings one to the gates of the old estate. Outside, a clutter of eating-houses, a park of automobiles, a horde of solicitous darkeys. Within, the calm and stateliness of a hundred and twenty-five years ago. I can imagine nothing more grave, more imposing, more beautifully simple and charming. Long rows of box hedges. Magnificent old trees. An incomparable stretch of lawn. A group of old and lovely houses, white, clean, regal. The home of a man of mark, a man of self-respect, a cultured and reposeful man, a gentleman. Go to the front of the

house and look up and down the Potomac. The solemn serenity of the panorama will make you catch your breath. Nowhere else in the East, not even on the Hudson, is there a more lordly site for a house. And nowhere is there a house that fits more perfectly into its surroundings. George himself designed it as it stands today, and he made it exactly right. One cannot imagine improving it in the slightest. It mirrors the man as not even his portrait mirrors him—precise, laborious, a lover of the amenities, hospitable, generous, well-groomed, touched with imagination. One could reconstruct Washington from this, his home. He loved it as he loved nothing else. Fighting his forlorn and desperate fights five hundred miles away, it was forever in his thoughts. It was his anchor to windward, his retreat and refuge, the hub and center of his whole adult life. A glance at it to-day tells more about him than all the books.

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, a *verein* of dutiful dames, keeps it up in a truly admirable manner. The grounds are cared for *con amore;* the old flowers still grow in the gardens; the house itself is spick and span; the explanatory placards are really explanatory; the attendants are silent and polite. But why, having gone so far, do they not go farther? Why not supply civilized nourishment to the strangers within the gates, and so promote their happiness and turn an honest penny? There is a delightful open-air restaurant at Versailles; there is another in the Schloss garden at Heidelburg; why not one at Mount Vernon? The place is too beautiful to be rushed through; one wants to linger all day, and in the middle of the day one hungers. Thus seized on a late visit, I resorted to a public eating-house without the gates—and went home bilious and full of curses. This eating-house announced a Virginia chicken dinner at three shillings; it turned out to be the worst ever admitted to my æsophagus—a horrible complex of stringy, half-raw rooster, soggy mashed potatoes, stale bread, clammy sliced tomatoes and boot-leg coffee—in brief, a meal for stevedores and dumb brutes. Why heap such insults upon the pilgrim? The Ladies' Association, I dare say, has no control over the eating outside; but why not set up good eating *in*side, and so blast those external ordinaries with decent competition? I present the idea for what it is worth. The up-keep of Mount Vernon is expensive; the Ladies' Association has to charge a quarter at the door; why not offer honest meals to patriots, and so gain both their gratitude and more of their cash?

Wilstach, in his book, does not enter into such problems, but contents himself with describing Mount Vernon as it is and as it used to be. Washington, in his day, led almost the ideal life down there. He had plenty of land, he had a fine house, he had a corps of contented slaves, and he had a rich wife. It was the money of this wife that paid for the improvements he was constantly making; the Washingtons themselves were land poor, and most of them were second-raters. They did not like the *chatelaine* of Mount Vernon. Very few of them, indeed, ever visited the place during her lifetime. Washington's own mother kept away. But there was an endless stream of other visitors. Before the war the General, then a Colonel, entertained many a party of British officers from the ships of war that came up the river, and after the war he was beset by hordes who yearned to feast their eyes upon him. It was a long journey and there were no inns nearby; in consequence, all callers had to be fed, and not a few of them had to be entertained overnight. The dinner hour was three o'clock and the General, when in residence, always sat at the head of his table. According to one chronicler, "he sent the bottle about pretty freely after dinner." Tea was served a couple of hours later, after which Washington retired to his study, and devoted himself to his interminable letters, diaries and accounts. (He left a whole wagon-load when he died.) Supper was at nine o'clock, but he did

not partake of it. Instead, he went to bed. The old four-poster is still there. A roomy and comfortable couch indeed, and in a most pleasant room. . . .

I commend "Mount Vernon" (*Doubleday-Page*) to your kind attention. It is an ingratiating and agreeable book. It tells a lot that is worth knowing about the greatest man the New World has ever seen.

IV

THE remaining tomes of the month offer little of interest. "A Handy Guide for Beggars," by Vachel Lindsay (*Macmillan*), contains some pretty sketches of the high-road, but is marred by preciosity and affectation, just as the author's poetry is. He strains and tortures his parts of speech; he seeks effects by elaborate means and then fails to achieve them at all. And in his philosophy, no less than in his writing, there is a plentiful buncombe.

On "Golf for Women," by some anonymous fair one (*Moffat-Yard*), I cannot report at all, for I am neither a woman nor a golfer, but my *blanchisseuse*, who is both, tells me that it is very instructive. The illustrations depict various ladies in the act of clouting golf balls—a series of truly appalling poses, and highly destructive to the charm of those who happen to be of matronly habit. "What's the Matter With Mexico?" by Casper Whitney (*Macmillan*), also eludes me, for I find it difficult to dredge up any interest in the crime and aspirations of the Mexicans, or in the political mountebankery that issues from their doings here in the United States. I lament, of course, that the proposed war with them failed to come off, for it would have taken Major-General Roosevelt into the field and so filled the world with joy, but further than that, to borrow old Friedrich's phrase, I consign them to statistics and the devil. Neither am I able to report upon "Creative Evolution," by Cora Lenore Williams, M.S. (*Knopf*), for it opens with a quotation from Henri Bergson, the parlor philosopher, and then introduces Edwin Markham, the laureate of the New Thought, and then goes sky-hooting into the interstellar spaces of the Chautauqua metaphysic. . . . Two books remain. "More Wanderings in London," by E. V. Lucas (*Doran*), needs only a line of notice; all of us know how well Mr. Lucas does that sort of thing. The full-page drawings in color by H. M. Livens add much to its value. In Joseph Pennell's "Pictures of the Wonder of Work" (*Lippincott*) the drawings are much less satisfactory. Some of them seem to be reproduced badly, but others—for example, the pictures of the Alberta oil wells — are intrinsically pointless and unbeautiful. Good photographs, in many cases, would have been far better. But mingled with these uninspired designs are a few very vigorous and impressive ones, and Mr. Pennell's text, at all events, is always spicy and amusing. The magazines of today, he says, have gone to pot; "there is scarcely an art editor left." . . .

V

NEXT month, I fear, another bout with the poets. I used to get rid of them in one article a year, but of late their books begin to multiply so horribly that I suppose it will soon take two. The output of books of all other sorts was greatly diminished by the war. This was particularly true of novels; for the first six months or so, indeed, I received but two or three a week, and so enjoyed an intellectual vacation, and greatly improved my mind. But the poets were not halted an instant. All they did was to stop burbling about their souls and hussies and begin gurgling about the lamentable strife overseas. I estimate that 100,000 war poems were composed and uttered in the United States between 4 o'clock P. M. of August 1, 1914, and noon of January 1, 1917. I would be glad to trade the whole lot, I am sorry to say, for a box of paper collars and the works of Flavius Josephus. Not a poem among them! Not a noble line!

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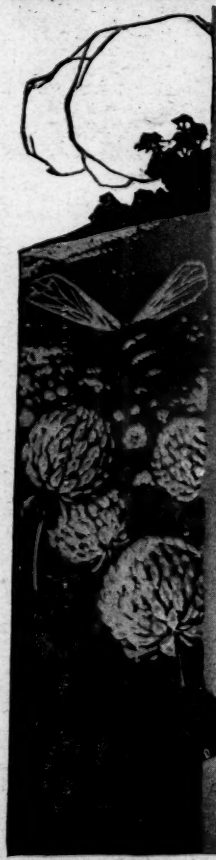

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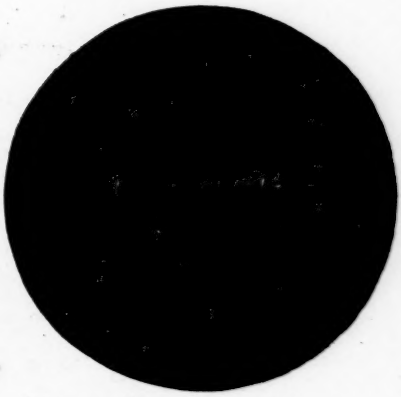

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